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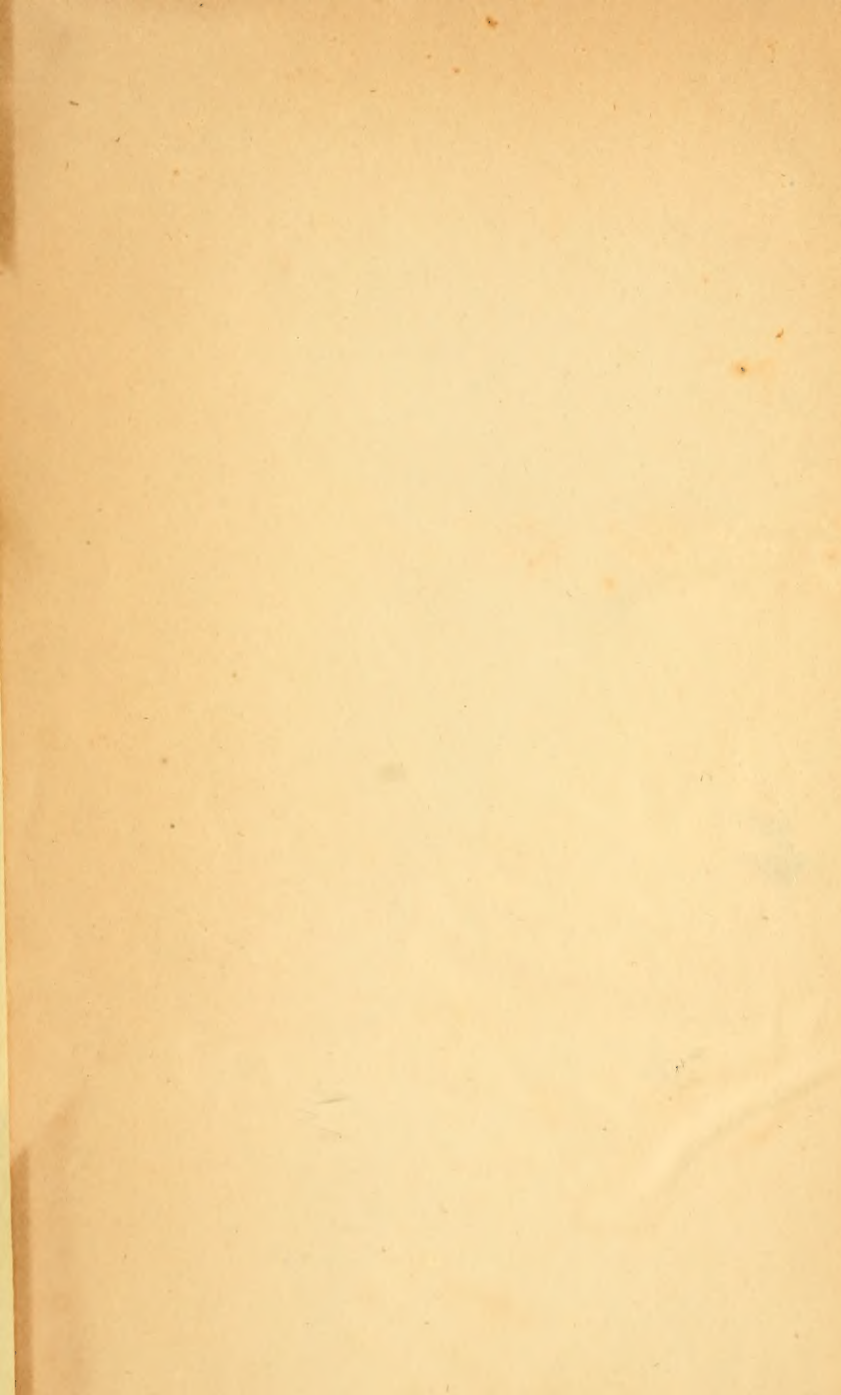
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SIXTEEN
SERMONS

FORMERLY PRINTED.

Now collected into ONE VOLUME.

Of the Evils falsely imputed to Christianity. In Two Sermons.

On the Queen's Accession Day.

Of Subjection to the Higher Powers.

The Unhappiness of Absolute Monarchy.

St. Paul's Behaviour to the Civil Magistrate.

Of the Extremes of Implicit Faith and Infidelity. In Four Sermons.

The Delusion of Protestants.

The Restoration made a Blessing.

The Nature and Duty of a Public Spirit.

The Nature of the Kingdom of Christ.

At the Funeral of Mrs. Howland.

On Jan. 30, before the House of Lords.

To which are added

Six SERMONS upon Public Occasions,

Never before PRINTED.

The Nature and Duty of Moderation.

Of God's Dealings with Sinful Nations.

The Duty of Praying for Governors.

Of the Government of God's Providence.

The Mischief of Intestine Quarrels.

The Consideration of our Latter End.

By BENJAMIN, Lord Bishop of Winchester.

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N,

Printed for JOHN KNAPTON, in Ludgate Street,

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PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
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P R E F A C E.

A Short Account of the *following Sermons*, now published in the Order of Time in which they were *preached*, will not, I hope, be thought improper.

The *Two first* of them were preached at St. *Switbin's* Church in the Year 1702, where I then officiated for Mr. *Hodges*, the worthy Rector of that Parish, during his *Absence at Sea*, as *Chaplain-General* of the *Fleet*. They were occasioned by the great *Fury* in *Party-matters*, which *then* raged: And were honestly designed to shew, that the *Violences* of *Christians* ought not to be charged upon the *Christian Religion* itself.

The *Third* Sermon was *preached* at the Church of *St. Peter's Poor*, on the *Accession-day* of *Queen ANNE* to the Throne, *Mar. 8, 1704-5*, when I thought it my Duty to take that first Opportunity, after my coming thither, of declaring against the Abuses of that Day. The printing of it was entirely owing to the earnest Request of some of the Chief Parishioners, who heard it. When it appeared, I was much abused in a Pamphlet, for what *They* thought so well of, by a *then* neighbouring *Clergyman*, to whom I gave no *Answer* but by a private Letter to a Friend of His.

The *Fourth* is, *That* Sermon about *Magistrates and Subjects*, preached at St. *Laurence's*, on *Sept. 29, 1705*, which was followed by a long *Controversy*, upon the Subject of it. I was called to it by the accidental Mention of Me, by a Friend, to Sir *Owen Buckingham*, then *Lord Mayor*, with whom I had not Myself the least Acquaintance. The *Reader* has heard, if not read, enough of this long ago. I shall say no more of it in this Place, than That, from the Date of this Sermon, near *Fifty Years* ago, a Torrent of *angry Zeal* began to pour out itself upon Me, which, tho' *for the present* indeed very disagreeable; yet, opened a Way to such *Explications* of the Doctrine of it, and *Reasonings* about it, as have produced What, at the End, makes Me not to repent of having preached it.

The *Fifth* was preached at the *Affizes*, in *March, 1707-8*, at *Hertford*, at the Request of the *High Sheriff*, Sir *Richard Houbton*. The Subjects of it, *The Happiness of the present Establishment, and the Unhappiness of Absolute Monarchy*, were pointed out to Me, too strongly to be neglected, by the public Writings of that Time; particularly Those of Mr. *Lestly*, then much celebrated by Many.

The *Sixth* was preached at the same Place, at the Summer *Affizes* in 1708, at the Request of the same Gentleman. The Subject is, St. *Paul's*

Paul's Behaviour to the *Civil Magistrate*: which was chosen by *Me*, on account of many *Passages*, relating to that *Apostle*, in the *Political Controversies* in those Days very warmly handled; and therefore *not unseasonable*.

The *Four* next Sermons, about the Duty of *Enquiry*, and the *Extremes* of *Implicit Faith* and *Infidelity*, were preached at my *Parish Church*, in the Year 1712, on occasion of the many Writings published about that Time, which seemed on one hand, to attack the *Christian Religion* itself; and, on the other, to discourage a *Free Examination* of it.

The *Eleventh*, called *The present Delusion of Many*, &c. was preached at *St Peter's Poor*, Nov. 5, 1715, and was occasioned by the *Rebellion* then on foot; and the unaccountable Conduct of *many Protestants*, with relation to it, which sufficiently justified the *Title* given to the *Sermon*, when it was, at the Desire of *Many*, immediately printed.

The *Twelfth* was preached on *May 29*, 1716, at *St. James's Chapel*, at the Request of the then *Lord Almoner*, to whose Care the Sermon of that Day belongs, All that I shall say of it is, That the *Subject* of it, viz. The Restoration made a *Blessing* by the Protestant Succession, which had then just taken Place; must be allowed to be as pertinent to the *Day*, as Any that could possibly have been thought of.

The *Thirteenth* was preached to the Society of the Gentlemen of *Wales*, *March 1, 1716*. The *Subject* of it, *The Nature and Duty of a Public Spirit*, I thought particularly of Importance at that Time ; and, I can truly say, was chosen without the least Thought of reflecting on any One Man or Set of Men, more than Another ; but entirely with a View to the *Duty* of *All* equally, to have a Sacred Regard to the Good of the Whole, and to sacrifice All their Passions to *That*.

The *Fourteenth* is the *Sermon* concerning *the Nature of the Kingdom of Christ*, which is known too well, by the many and public *Debates* occasioned by it, to need any word about it here. At whose Request it was commanded to be published, I know not. But I know, that it was not, either directly or indirectly, from any Desire of mine.

The *Fifteenth* was preached at the *Funeral* of an Excellent Lady, *Mrs Howland* ; and designed, as all such Discourses ought to be, for the Use and Service of All *Christians*. But Here I cannot but think it a Due, in point of Gratitude, to Her Memory, publicly to acknowledge this Singular Obligation to Her, That in the Year 1710, when *Fury* seemed to be let loose, and to distinguish *Me* particularly ; She Herself, unasked, unapplied to ; without my having ever seen Her, or been seen by Her ;

Her; chose, by presenting Me to the *Rectory* of *Strettham*, then just vacant, to shew, in her own Expression, *That she was neither ashamed, nor afraid*, to give Me that public Mark of her *Regard* at that Critical Time.

The *Sixteenth* was preached on the *Anniversary Fast-day*, on account of the *Martyrdom* of King *Charles I.* and published by Order of the *House of LORDS.* It was not calculated to provoke, but to appease, the Passions of Men. And, as far as publickly appeared, It was received without any Marks of much Displeasure against it.

Of the *Six* additional Sermons, never before published, I need say no more, than that the *Two* first were preached at *St. Swithin's*, and the other *Four* at *St. Peter's Poor*, upon Days appointed for public *Fasts* or *Thansgivings*: And that they are chiefly upon the *Subjects* of Universal Amendment of our Lives; Good Temper, *Union*, *Love*, and *mutual Charity*, at Home: All, as *Practical* and *Useful*, as I could make Them; and equally applicable to All *Men* and *Christians*, in the Nation.

If Any shall judge, from some Discourses in this Volume, That I used to entertain my Parishioners, in my *Sunday-Discourses*, with *Political*, or *Controversial*, Points, they will be as much *mistaken*, as many others were heretofore *disappointed*, who came to hear me,

with the same Notion. The *Sermons* on the *Terms of Acceptance*, printed long ago, may best shew, in how *plain*, and how *practical*, a Manner I endeavoured to instruct Those in whom I was most nearly concerned.

The only *Inferences* in my own Favor, which I wish to be drawn from what is now published, are, That I never omitted any One public Opportunity, in proper Time and Place, of defending and strengthening the true and only *Foundation* of all our *Civil* and *Religious Liberties*, when it was every Day most zealously attacked; and of doing all in my Power, that All the *Subjects* of this *Government*, and this *Royal Family*, should understand, and approve of, those *Principles*, upon which alone their Happiness is fixed; and *without which*, it could never have been rightfully Established, and must in Time fall to the Ground: And also, That I was as ready, whenever Occasion was offered, by the Writings and Attacks of *Unbelievers*, and by the absurd *Representations* of *Others*, to defend a Religion, most amiable in all its precepts, and most beneficial to *Human Society*, in the only Way proper; by shewing it, in it's native Light, with which it shines in the *New Testament* itself, free from all the *False Paint* with which *Some*, or the undeserved *Dirt* with which *Others* have covered it.

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&c.

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which the Christian Religion hath been made
the Occasion.

S E R M O N I.


Preached at St. Swithin's Church, in 1702.

St. MATTHEW X. 34.

*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth:
I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

Or, as it is in St. LUKE, Chap. xii. 51.

*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?
I tell you, Nay, but rather Division.*

THE full Meaning of these Words, S E R M.
(spoken by our Lord to his Apostles, I.
when he was giving them Commission 
to preach his Religion to the World) we
shall find to be this, if we consider the fore-
going and following Verses. " You may
" imagine, perhaps, that the Excellence of
" my Religion, and the Evidence that accom-
" panies it, will effectually recommend it to
" the Understanding, and the Affections of
" Mankind; that the Humility, and Meek-
Bness,

SERM.

I.

" nefs, which it commands, will influence
 " the World; and that fuch an Inftitution
 " as this will breathe Peace, and an univer-
 " fal Calmnefs, into the Minds of Men. But
 " it will not be fo. How excellent foever
 " it is in itfelf; how much Evidence foever
 " accompanies it; it will not be received as
 " you would expect: nor will it effectually
 " contribute to the Peace and Quiet of the
 " World; though it tends very much in its
 " own Nature to do fo. Nay, This very
 " Religion, which I came into the World to
 " plant and propagate, (I forefee, and fore-
 " warn you of it,) will be made the Occa-
 " fion, and prove the Caufe, of much Divi-
 " fion and Strife, of the ftrongeft Paflions,
 " Hatreds, and Animofities; nay, of the ut-
 " moft Pitch of Malice and Perfecution,
 " and of the greateft Barbarities, and Cruel-
 " ties: and this, amongst Men of the fame
 " Nation, of the fame Blood, of the fame
 " Family; amongst Men who have the Ties
 " of Nature, Friendfhip, Alliance, Intereft,
 " to make them good, kind, and beneficent,
 " to one another. *Think not that I am come*
 " *to fend Peace on Earth*, that is, Think not
 " that the Confequence of my coming into
 " the World, and preaching a new Religion
 " in it, will be this, that Men will fincerely
 " embrace

“ embrace it; or that it will tame the Passi-
“ ons of those who shall pretend to embrace
“ it, or that the World will follow the Pre-
“ cepts of Humanity and good Nature, laid
“ down in it. No, *I came not to send Peace,*
“ *but a Sword*, that is, The Consequence of
“ my coming into the World, and promul-
“ gating this Religion, will not be *Peace on*
“ *Earth, and Good-will amongst Men*: but this
“ very Religion, this holy and peaceable In-
“ stitution, will (through the Perverseness of
“ Mankind) be often made a Cover and Pre-
“ tence for the greatest Barbarities; and often
“ prove the Occasion of Disorder, and Passion,
“ and Malice, and Violence, and of all the
“ Evils you can imagine.”

We must observe, that our *Lord*, in the
Text, doth not speak of his Design in coming
into the World: for it is very plain that He
came with design to send Peace and good
Nature upon Earth, and to plant the noblest
and most extensive Charity in the Hearts of
Men. But he speaks of a most unhappy
Consequence of his appearing, and institu-
ting his Religion: that it should be turned,
by the Contrivances of the wicked Part of
God's Creatures, to very bad Purposes, and
ill Uses; to the Disturbance of that World,
which it was designed to compose and make
B 2 happy.

SERM.

I.



happy. And because much of this hath been seen in all Ages, and all Nations, in which the Sound of the *Gospel* hath been heard; and a great deal of it is still to be seen in our own Age and Nation, and because many have been offended at Christ, and his Doctrine, on this unhappy Account, and have blamed Christianity for the Sake of this, which it hath unwillingly been the Occasion of: therefore, it may be proper and useful to make some Observations upon this Subject. And what I design upon it, is,

I. To observe the Truth of what was here predicted by our Lord: that *Christianity* hath been made the Occasion of much Disturbance, and of many fatal Divisions, Hatreds, and Persecutions, in the World.

II. To vindicate *Christianity* from the Guilt and Blame of this Unhappiness.

III. To consider whence it hath proceeded.

IV. To make some proper Observations, and draw some useful Inferences, from what I shall have said upon this Subject.

I. I shall observe the Truth of what is here predicted by our Lord: that the *Christian Religion* hath been made the Occasion of much Disturbance; of many sad Divisions, Hatreds, and Persecutions in the World.

It

It is, indeed, a very moving and uneasy S E R M.
 Consideration, that, from the Time of its I.
 first Appearance to this very Day, such an
 use hath been made of it, or of something or
 other supposed to belong to it, as hath tempt-
 ed some to think that the Mischief it hath
 given Rise to, in the World, is not counter-
 vailed by all the Good it hath hitherto
 brought forth. And there needs but a very
 little Knowledge in the History of former
 Times, or the Transactions of these later
 Ages, to make one wish that there were
 much less reason to think so, than there ap-
 pears to be.

What our *Saviour* chiefly had an Eye to,
 in the *Text*, was, probably that Persecu-
 tion, and those Instances of Malice, which
 He saw it would occasion in the World, at
 its first Appearance: that Hatred of *Christians*
 it would produce in the Breasts of *Unbelievers*;
 and those Storms of Persecution, which the
 Profession of it would raise against them. But,
 as He could not likewise be ignorant of those
 Hatreds and Animosities it would, in after
 Ages, raise amongst *Christians* themselves,
 against one another; to the Disturbing, and
 ruining their common Peace and Quiet: so,
 He did not (we may be sure) exclude these;

SERM.
I.

but had an Eye to them all, in the Words of the *Text*.



When *Christianity* first appeared, and first was preached; the Prejudices and Passions of Men ran high against it: as it was a Contradiction to their received Ways of Worship; to their former and settled Principles; to the Dictates and Practices of their Forefathers; and to their own indulged Lusts, and evil Habits. And so the very Profession of it, much more the bold preaching of it, alarmed all Mankind against the Men who professed and preached it. They were hated by their nearest Relations; they were exposed to the greatest Evils in Life: and they were persecuted even to Death: All Countries were disturbed at them; and all Princes, and Magistrates made it their Business to extirpate them. This was their Case almost constantly, till their Numbers increased; till *Christianity* became the established Religion of whole Nations; and Princes became the Temporal Patrons of the Church. And thus did this Religion which *Jesus* came to plant in the World, give an Alarm to the Kingdoms of it: and was made the Handle to unspeakable Disquiet and Disturbance, Malice, and Persecution, in it.


But when it came to be the settled Religion

gion; to have the Approbation, and Countenance of Princes; and to enjoy the favourable Look of the great Men of this World: what a glorious Scene would any one expect, who seriously looks into the Design, Nature, and Precepts of it? What a Scene of Calmness and Serenity of Mind; of Mortification, and Conquest of those Passions and Lusts, from whence proceeds all the Mischief in the World? What a Scene of Love and Beneficence to one another; of Joy and Delight in one another's Happiness; of Openness and Freedom; of Sincerity and Kindness; of Humility, Condescension, Humanity, and Meekness? What could any one expect, who searcheth into the Gospel, more than the Humours and Actions of Mankind, but that Peace and Holiness should have kissed each other; that Contentment and Happiness should have flourished in the Earth; that all that could contribute to the Quiet and Satisfaction of the World, should from this Time have abounded in it?

Would you think, That, as soon as the Christians had Rest from the World about them, their Passions ran as high against one another as the Passions of the unbelieving World had done against *them* before? Would you imagine that they turned from suffering

S E R M. gloriously, to biting and devouring ; to hating
 I. and condemning one another ? That their
 strongest and most avowed Hatreds, their
 most fatal Divisions and Animosities, took
 their Rise from, and had their Foundation in,
 some Point of Religion, some Point of Faith
 or Worship ? And that they were often
 more concerned for some insignificant Mat-
 ter, or some Point of Speculation, that the
 Gospel had not so absolutely determined, as
 to leave no Room for Diversity of Opinions ;
 That they were too often, I say, much more
 zealous to defend, or oppose, *These*, than to
 preserve the Obligation, and secure the Prac-
 tice of the weightier Matters of the Gospel ?
 Yet thus it was : and thus it hath been ever
 since, to that Degree, that it is now hardly a
 Question whether more Unkindness and In-
 humanity, more Malice and Hatred, more
 Violence and Barbarity, were heretofore shewn
 by the unbelieving *Jews* and *Gentiles* towards
Christians, for the Sake of their Religion,
 than have been since shewn by professed *Chris-
 tians* towards one another, on the Score of
 some religious Differences.

The contending with the Sword of the
 Spirit, the Word of Truth, and Meekness,
 for the Purity of Faith and Worship once
 delivered to the Saints, was truly commenda-
 ble and praiseworthy. This Sort of *Contention*
 for

for the *Gospel*, in the Spirit of the *Gospel*, hath SERM.
 ever tended to the increasing of Charity, as I.
 well as to the manifesting of Truth. But a 
false Zeal quickly devoured it, and took its
 Place: and very soon prompted Men of ill
 Tempers, and worldly Designs, to make a
 greater Distinction amongst *Christians*, than
 need; to stigmatize honefter Men than them-
 selves with hard Names, and odious Appella-
 tions; and then, to treat them contumeliously,
 and as Persons unfit to be dealt with in the
 Ways of Humanity, and Candour. And, on
 the other Side, this same Pretense gave occasion
 to Men of Parts and Passion, when they saw
 themselves likely to be oppressed, to strengthen
 themselves in their Opinions; to form Par-
 ties upon a Foundation distinct from that of
 the flourishing Party; to enter into close De-
 signs and Combinations; and so to help for-
 ward the Disturbance and Disquiet of the
 Christian Church.

If we pass from these first Ages down-
 wards; who can speak, or hear, of such things
 as have been publicly transacted amongst
Christians, on religious Accounts, without a
 very sensible Commotion within? We may
 read it in Histories, and we may see it with
 our Eyes, that there is an immortal Hatred;
 an Uneasiness not ever likely to cease, between
Christians of several Denominations. There

S E R M. are *Inquisitions* and Torments designed, and
 I. made use of, by *Christians* against *Christians*,
 beyond the Example of former Ages; and beyond the Cruelty of either Jewish or Heathen Persecutors. We have known Men tortured and persecuted; murdered and massacred; banished from their Possessions; deprived of their Estates; expelled their native Land; separated from their Children and Friends, or their Friends and Children torn by Violence from them; for the Sake of Religion, and under Pretence of doing Service to the *Church* of God, by extending and propagating the Faith and Worship of a particular Set of Men. And how exactly hath the Account of this Matter given by our *Saviour* been verified, in several Countries, in these last Ages, as well as the first Times of the Gospel? *A man hath been at variance against his Father; and the Daughter against her Mother; and the Daughter in law against her Mother in law, and a Man's Foes have been those of his own Household,* as it follows just after the Text in St. *Matth.* 35, 36. And as it is in St. *Luke*, ch. xii. 52, 53. *There have been five in one House divided, three against two, and two against three. The Father divided against the Son, and the Son against the Father; the Mother against the Daughter, and the Daughter against the Mother; the*
 Mother

Mother in law against her Daughter in law, and the Daughter in law against her Mother in law.

S E R M.

I.

We of this Nation, indeed, read, and hear at a Distance, of greater Barbarities and Cruelties, than we have ourselves experienced, or seen with our Eyes; but yet we, amongst others, may help to prove the Truth of what I am now observing. For, what Heats, and Passions; what Unkindnesses, and Incivilities; what Hatreds and Variances; what Parties and Distinctions; nay, what Projects and Designs are there often seen amongst us, which, (if the Bottom of Things be searched into,) owe their Original, or their Prosecution, to some real, or pretended, Difference in religious Opinions, or Modes of Worship? Names are invented to distinguish some from others, and make them odious and suspected; and these Names are commonly taken from something that bears a Relation to Religion, and the Worship of God: and the Church is too often hooked into Designs, in which it hath little to do; and sacred Words are made to serve the Purposes of projecting Men. For this is laid down as certain, that though True Religion be little regarded, but rather trampled on, by the Generality of the World; yet the Pretences taken from thence are moving, and never fail to alarm the Multitude, and to forward a Design. Any Doctrine, manifestly framed

SERM. framed to serve a Purpose, can at any Time
 I. easily be made the distinguishing Mark of a
 true *Christian*, or the true Church: and all
 that will not yield to the Truth of it, shall
 presently be branded with some religious Nick-
 name or other. *Heretick*, and *Schismatick*,
 at the Head; and Multitudes of other oppro-
 brious Names ranked under them; have all
 been taken from some Difference in the hold-
 ing and professing the same Religion. And
 they have been used so freely, and after such
 a manner, as that they have often effectually
 contributed to the Destruction of Christian
 Charity; to the Overthrow of Peace and Con-
 cord; to the Ruine of many excellent Designs;
 and to the promoting many bad ones.

It is a Shame to speak of these Things:
 but it is too plain to be dissembled, that it hath
 fared thus with *Christianity* ever since it ap-
 peared; that it hath not only been made the
 Occasion of the bitterest Persecutions from the
 Infidel Part of the World, but also of the bit-
 terest Hatreds, and strongest Malice, and most
 irreconcilable Divisions, amongst *Christians*
 themselves: And these, at length, rooted in
 the Hearts of Men, to that Depth, and with
 that Firmness, that it appears next to impossi-
 ble to extirpate them; or to restore the World
 to the Spirit of Meekness, and Quiet, and to
 the Temper of reasonable Creatures. *Next*
to impossible, I say: For what can we think,
 when

when all the Attempts Almighty God hath seen fit to make towards it, have hitherto proved ineffectual, when even his last Dispensation by the Hands of his *Sen*, sent from Heaven, hath been so far from healing the Wounds and Breaches in the Love and Regards of Men to one another, that it hath been abused to the inflaming and widening them? When God himself *speaks to them of Peace*, and yet *they make themselves ready to battle*? When they have taken occasion from this last Trial of his, designed to plant Peace and Unity in the Earth, to be the more quarrelsome, and the more incensed against one another? when they search into the Bowels of this very Revelation, and fetch Fuel out of this most peaceable Institution, to set themselves, and the World about them, in Flames: What small Hope, I say, can we have of the Restitution and Re-establishment of Quiet and Harmony in the Minds and Actions of Men; whilst they are ever finding something in Religion itself, to exasperate their Minds against one another; to make their Lives unquiet, and Society unharmonious?

The Prophets have invain described the Golden Age of their *Messiah*, and invain extolled his glorious and pacific Reign; unless God himself interpose. *The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb* (saith the Prophet *Isaiab*, ch. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9,) and the *Leopard shall lie down with the*

S E R M. *the Kid: and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them. And the Cow and the Bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the Lion shall eat straw like the Ox. And the sucking Child shall play on the Hole of the Aspe, and the weaned Child shall put his Hand on the Cockatrice Den. They shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy Mountain: for the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.*

If this be a Description which relates to the Reign of *Christ*, and to the Glories of his Kingdom, when it should be set up in this World; we must with Grief remark, that either the *Prophet* speaks only with respect to the Nature and Tendency of *Christ's* Doctrine; that, if Men would heartily receive and practice it, a glorious Peace and Happiness would be diffused over the Earth: or else, that He prophesies of some happy Times, unknown yet, which future Ages are to be blessed with. For *the Earth is, indeed, full of the Knowledge of the Lord*, in this Sense, that the Profession of *Christianity* is very widely spread. There is Opportunity enough for *Knowledge*: but there hath been yet but little of this universal *Charity* seen, or felt, in the World. *The Earth is full of the Knowledge of the Lord: and yet the Wolf dwelleth not with the Lamb; nor doth*

doth the *Leopard* lie down with the *Kid*; nor do the *Cow* and the *Bear* feed together; nor doth the sucking *Child* play upon the *Hole* of the *Aspe*; nor doth the weaned *Child* put his hand upon the *Cockatrice* *Den*; nor have these rapacious and terrible Creatures left off to hurt or destroy in *God's* holy mountain. Nor hath any thing, of what was intended by this come to pass: that is, *Mens* *Tempers* have not been universally tamed and subdued; but the *Wild* and *Wicked* are still wild and wicked, still bite and devour the *Innocent*; and still a *War* is carried on amongst *Men*.

Nay, for what appears, and for all those Advances that have been hitherto made towards a firm Union, and a sincere and universal Friendship amongst all *Men*; every one of these figurative Expressions of the *Prophet* may be literally fulfilled, before an universal Calmness reign thro' the *Earth*. And the *Wolf*, and the *Lion*, and the *Leopard*, and the *Bear*, may sooner enter into Terms of Reconciliation and Amity, with the milder Beasts, and with Mankind; than the passionate and violent, the hurtful and venomous, the cruel and malicious, Part of Mankind shall suffer themselves to be tamed and subdued into good Nature and Charity; or be bound up by any Rules of Quiet and Harmony. But tho' we see so little

S E R M.
I.

Sign

S E R M. Sign of this hitherto; yet we know that not a

1. Tittle of all that is spoken shall fail.

In the mean while, that it may be no Objection against *Christianity* itself, and no matter of Scandal and Offence to us, that it hath proved the Occasion of so sharp Swords, and so much Division upon Earth; it becomes us to enquire, as I proposed,

II. Whether the Gospel itself be not wholly free from all the Guilt of this great Unhappiness; or whether it be possible, with the least Degree of Justice, to attribute this to the Doctrine, or Design, of *Jesus Christ*; to the Nature or Tendency of any Thing contained in *Christianity*. A very few Words will suffice upon this Head. For let any Person, of never so little Capacity, look into the Account of our Saviour's Life, his Actions and his Words, recorded in the *Gospels*; or into the Sermons, and Epistles, and Behaviour of his Apostles; and see if they find, through the whole, any the least Encouragement given, either by Example or Precept, to any, even the lowest, Degree of that Temper of Mind, or Manner of Deportment, which doth so much as border upon ill Nature, or cruel Usage of our Fellow-Creatures. Did not our Lord himself condescend to all the Offices of Love and Beneficence to all the World of Sinners about him? Do not all his Precepts, which

which respect human Society, manifestly tends to the Peace and Quiet of it? And would they not effectually procure and establish it, were they thoroughly attended to, and universally practised? Doth not He command, upon pain of God's eternal Displeasure against those who neglect it, the Practise of all the peaceable and quiet Virtues; and forbid the harbouring the very Thoughts and Surmises, that may possibly tend to break in upon the Happiness of the World about us? Meekness, Humility, Condescension, Forbearance, Forgiveness, Tenderness, and the like: are they not indispensably enjoined? And the Vices contrary to these, Haughtiness, Pride, Revenge, Unmercifulness, Malice, and Ill-will: are they not strictly forbidden; their Punishment declared to be certain, and intolerable? They are forbidden, in all Cases, and at all Times. Nothing can ever justify them: nothing is supposed in the Gospel ever to excuse those who are guilty of them. Nay, Love, and Beneficence, and a Readiness to be reconciled to our greatest and most violent Enemies, are made the shining and distinguishing Characters of a true Christian. And could He, who came to institute such a Religion, full of such Precepts, and constantly recommending such sort of Virtues above all others, be supposed to come on any other Design, but to compose the jarring Tem-

SER M. pers, and Actions of Men, into Concord and

I. Harmony? And can any one charge such a
 Religion, that seems to be calculated in all its
 Parts, chiefly for the planting, maintaining,
 and increasing, Peace and Love in the World;
 can any one, I say, charge this Religion with
 the Guilt of those Heats, and Dissensions,
 which it hath been by Accident made the Oc-
 casion of? No, It must be plain, beyond Con-
 tradiction, to all who will look into it, that
Christianity itself hath not the least Part in this
 Guilt: but that we must seek for the true
 Source, and Foundation of all this Unhappi-
 ness somewhere else. This is what I now de-
 sign, *viz.*

III. To consider, whence this great Un-
 happiness hath truly proceeded; and where
 the Guilt of it is justly to be fixed. And

I. This Unhappiness manifestly proceeded,
 in the first Ages of the Gospel, from the Pre-
 judices and Passions of the unbelieving World,
 both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This I mention first,
 because the Disturbance and Disquiet that
 sprang from this Original was first in order of
 Time, commencing immediately with the
 Gospel itself: and was what our Lord chiefly
 respected in the *Text*; which was spoken to
 the Persons who were themselves to be the first
 Propagators of his Religion, and the first Wit-
 nesses to this fatal Consequence of it. A Scene
 of

of Violence and Fury immediately attended the opening of the Gospel to the World. The Preachers, and Propagators of it were persecuted, beyond what had been known in the World before ; and all the sincere Professors of it hated by their very Friends and Relations, and pursued by all the Evils of this World, and all that is terrible to Flesh and Blood. Indeed this Persecution, and these Dissensions, had not happened in the World, if *Christianity* had not been preached to the Nations of it. But shall not *God* do his part to the reforming and amending the World ; because there are some in it that will make this very Attempt of his an Occasion of their growing worse ? Shall not *God* send a divine Person into the World, to preach a pure and holy Religion, full of *Charity, Humility, and Peace*, because some will make this an Opportunity of their increasing in Fierceness and Inhumanity ? Had the Christian Religion, indeed, given the unbelieving World any Reason to be so incensed against it, and so inhospitable to its Professors ; somewhat might be said in Vindication of their Practice ; and some Blame justly laid at the Door of *Christianity*. But wicked Men raised this terrible Scene of Persecution against it ; not because they had no reason to receive it ; but because they would not. And they would not receive it, because it was against their Interests,

ERM.
I.

S E R M. or their Lusts, or their Humours, to receive
 I. it. Not that it divested any of the Magistrates
 of this World of their lawful Authority ; or
 dissolved the Obligation of Obedience in their
 Subjects. Not that it concerned itself with
 the Rights and Privileges of Kingdoms, and
 Civil Societies ; or brake in upon the Govern-
 ment, or Discipline, of Nations. Not that it
 tended in its Nature to render Society disagree-
 able : to make Men ill-natured, or morose, or
 uncharitable, or unjust, or cruel, or hypo-
 critical ; or recommended any thing to Man-
 kind contrary to the Peace and Quiet of the
 State. Nothing of this could be laid to its
 Charge by its greatest Adversaries. But the
 Truth of the Case was this. They hated
 and derided it, because, if it had universally
 taken place, the Follies and Superstitions of
 their received Forms of Worship must have
 vanished ; and the whole Fabric of their Fore-
 fathers Religion been shaken, and ruined. Let
 a Form of Worship be never so tedious with
 pompous Ceremonies ; never so full of Fop-
 peries, and ridiculous Circumstances ; never
 so unworthy of reasonable Creatures to offer,
 or of God to receive ; yet there is I know not
 what Fondness for it, riveted in the Minds and
 Affections of Men, if it descended down to
 them from their Forefathers, and can but
 plead Age and Prescription.

But

But perhaps *Christianity*, with the Evidences that at first accompanied it, might have got over this Difficulty; and have born down this blind and senseless Veneration of Antiquity. But this was not all it had to encounter. It opposed the Passions, and Lusts, and present worldly Interests of Men. The *Jews* saw, it condemned and opposed that Course of Sensuality and Covetousness they were generally engaged in; and that it put an End to their Hopes of Temporal Prosperity, and fleshly Pleasure, and Triumphs over their Enemies, under the Reign of their *Messiah*. The great Men of the World found it most opposite to the main Design of their Lives; and irreconcilable with that Ambition, and Pride, and insatiable Love of Riches and Grandeur, which they had entertained, and could not part with. A very small Part of the World, as things went then, found any the least Comfort or Satisfaction in any of its Proposals. These were the Reasons why both *Jews* and *Gentiles* made it their Business to crush it in its Infancy; and to persecute, even to Death, the first Preachers and Professors of it: because they carried such Evidence along with them, in the Miracles they every where wrought, that they judged it must presently gain ground, if not thus heartily, and inhumanly resisted. This is a plain Account how it came to pass, that

SERM. the *Christian Religion* was at first the Occasion
I. of much Disturbance, and of bitter Persecu-
tions, in the World. And whether this pro-
ceeded from any thing blameable in itself, or
from the unreasonable Prejudices, and deep-
rooted Vices, of the unbelieving World, may
be left to any one of Common Sense to judge.

S E R M O N

*Concerning the Divisions, and Cruelties, of
which the Christian Religion hath been made
the Occasion.*

S E R M O N II.


Preached at *St. Swithin's Church*, in 1702.

St. MATTHEW X. 34.

*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth:
I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

Or, as it is in St. LUKE, Chap. xii. 51.

*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?
I tell you, Nay, but rather Division.*

HAVING from these Words, *first*, made S E R M.
some Observations upon the *Matter of* II.
Faët, (here predicted by our Lord,) 
that *Christianity* hath been made the Occasion
of many bitter Persecutions, fatal Divisions,
and Hatreds, in the World: and having, in
the *second* Place, vindicated *Christianity* it self
from the Guilt and Blame of it; I proposed,
Thirdly, To consider whence this Unhappiness
hath truly proceeded; and where the Guilt of
it is justly to be fixed. The *first* Observation
was, that the bitter Persecutions, and Animo-
fities

SERM.

II.



fities, occasioned at its first Appearance, proceeded entirely from the unreasonable Prejudices and Lusts, and Passions, of the unbelieving World.

Let us now turn our Thoughts from the unbelieving to the believing World; from the Men that persecuted *Christianity*, to the Men that have embraced, and do profess it. And, as we have before observed how much Hatred and Division, how many Barbarities and Persecutions, amongst *Christians* themselves, have taken their Rise from Religion, and been founded on a sacred Principle: so let us now consider whence this Unhappiness, amongst the Disciples of the same Master, hath proceeded, and from what Root it hath sprung.

2. *Secondly*, therefore, It is very plain that much of this Unhappiness hath proceeded from the Projects, and Designs; the Ambition, or Pride, or Covetousness, of the wicked Part of the *Christian* World. *Christianity* never pretended to reform those, that are resolved to be wicked: and no wonder that such as these (who have no Conscience, and no Principles of Religion,) when they have any of their own Contrivances to bring to effect, make use of the properest Means to accomplish them. They know that there is no better, nor more moving, Pretense, than the Care of Religion,
and

and the Church of God: and therefore, this SER M.
must be the Engine to set forward their Un- II.
dertakings; and their unhallowed Lips must
profane holy Words, that these holy Words
may sanctify their unhallowed Actions. Thus,
for instance, if the Bounds of Power are to be
enlarged beyond right and just; if a Number
of Men must be extirpated, banished, or de-
pressed; something in Religion and the Church
is often brought in, to colour over the vile
Wickedness, to shelter it from Scandal, and
ripen it for Success. If a Prince's favourable
Smile be to be obtained for one Sort of Men,
and his Displeasure to be kindled against ano-
ther; it is often seen that nothing will more
effectually do this, than some Consideration
taken from their Difference in Opinion, or
Practise, with relation to Religion, and the
Worship of God.

This Method is frequently made use of by
those who mean nothing more than the com-
passing their own Designs; the enlarging their
own Credit and Interest; the ingratiating
themselves with some whose Favour may turn
to good Account. And so the Peace of Hu-
man Society; the Quiet of the World; and
the Satisfaction and Contentment of their
Neighbours are sacrificed, at all Adventures, to
their own private Covetousness, or Ambition,
or Pride, or Revenge, or some wicked Humour

S E R M. or other. And because nothing better can be
 II. pretended, Religion must be drawn into the
 Quarrel: whilst these Men themselves, who
 are the forwardest to hide their Designs under
 the Masque of something holy, are of all o-
 thers the most ready to reproach Religion it
 self on this very Account; and the first to ob-
 ject against it the many Disturbances and Dis-
 quiets, it hath occasioned in the World.

It is indeed absurdly ridiculous, to hear
 Men of notorious Looseness, Men of profane
 and Atheistical Conversations, solicitous about
 the Honour of *God*: and to see, how Men,
 who have either never appeared at the pub-
 lic Worship, or never appeared there with
 Decency, can, upon Occasion, conceive a
 mighty Concern for the Credit and Beauty of
 it; how their Breasts can labour with the Heat
 of a pious Zeal; and all their Designs and En-
 deavours, on a sudden, be directed to the main-
 taining and supporting the Church of *God*.
 But this must be expected, we see plainly,
 whilst there are wicked and designing Men,
 under the Covert of the Christian Profession,
 in this World. For they that have selfish,
 and unchristian Designs; they that make no
 scruple of cherishing Ambition, or Pride, or
 Covetousness, or Revenge, will never make
 any scruple of using Religion, and the Church,
 as Instruments to promote the Designs such
 Tempers

Tempers of Mind will put them upon. Add S E R M.
to this, II.

3. *Thirdly*, That much of the Unhappiness we are now speaking of, may have proceeded from the Passions, and Weaknesses, and Imprudences, of sincere *Christians*; *Christians* that truly design well, and desire to promote the Honour of their Master, and their Religion. A good *Christian* will never indeed knowingly interpose in the promoting any Design, or advancing any Cause, to the Destruction of the Peace and Quiet of the *Christian* World; but a good *Christian* is not always secure, or out of danger of being imposed upon; when this Cause is varnished over, and painted before his Eyes, so as to appear quite another thing. Honest Men are often led by Knaves; and made the Tools of those, whom they would abhor, if they knew their Insides. They are often drawn in, to give Credit to a Cause, which, without their Presence, would not be tolerable: That so their Example may be urged in Defence of what wants better Arguments.

Christianity doth not make Men more discerning, or more learned in the Wisdom of this World, than it finds them. But yet, it neither commands, nor disposes, Men to be cheated, and imposed upon by every Pretense. It doth not instruct them to put on an Air of
Uncon-

S E R M. Unconcernedness, or Indifference, in what
 II. respects the Happiness of Mankind, or the
 Society they belong to: Nor doth it educate
 them in Stupidity; or a Disregard of every
 thing but their own private Devotion and
 Piety. But, as it is far from sending them
 into Desarts, and Solitudes; into Places un-
 frequented by human Society; as it chiefly
 commends to them the Practise of those Vir-
 tues that adorn Conversation, and make the
 World about them happy: So it recommends
 to them somewhat of the Wisdom and Cun-
 ning of Serpents, as well as the Harmlessness
 and Innocence of Doves; lest the wicked and
 designing Part of the World should manage
 their Innocence and Simplicity to the Mischief
 of others, and the Ruin of Peace; and render
 their Harmlessness as fatal in its Influence upon
 the World, as if they were cloathed with Bar-
 barity, and Cruelty. It is no advantageous
 Part, therefore, of a good Man's Character,
 who is obliged to act in Society, that He
 sees with other Men's Eyes, or hears with
 other Men's Ears; or that he is, out of an
 affected Negligence, or fond Opinion of ano-
 ther's Abilities, or want of Resolution, led
 blindfold by others: because he may often be
 surprized into Things of very ill Consequence;
 and, when he little thinks of it, bring a Scan-
 dal upon that Religion he heartily loves, by an
 unwary

unwary helping to make it serve the Purposes of Hatred, and Division. S E R M.

II.

What I have said under these two last Heads is, That there are wicked and designing Men in the World, who will, if it be possible, contrive their Designs so, as that Religion and the Church shall be drawn in, to bear no inconsiderable Part in them; and that there are good and pious Men who will not be at the Pains to examine their Designs thoroughly; or who cannot see through all the Colour they can lay upon them; or who are too easily cheated, and alarmed by their Pretenses: And that upon these Accounts it must so happen, that something in Religion will be too often made the Occasion of Disorder, and Uncharitableness, and Dissensions, and Persecutions, in the World of *Christians*.

4. But, *Fourthly*, Much of this Unhappiness hath proceeded from Mens not being contented with the Simplicity of *Christianity*, as it is to be found in the Gospels; from their making new Creeds; their adding new Articles of Faith to those laid down in the New Testament; and laying new Impositions upon the rest of *Christians*, unknown to *Christ* and his Apostles. This I may safely affirm, that had *Christians* been always content with a mutual Agreement in the fundamental Doctrines of their Religion, as they lie in the *Gospel* it self; and

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and the indispensable Obligation of the Practice of all the Duties commanded in it; much of this fatal Consequence of it might have been hindred; and very much of the Scandal redounding from it, have been prevented. But there hath ever been an Itch, in some or other of Power and Authority, to alter the Terms of Love and Concord settled by *Christ*; by framing some new Character, and some fresh Note of Distinction, among *Christians*: And this hath ever begot Opposition, and Controversies managed (on all sides) with Aggravations and Provocations; and this hath brought forth Variances, and Passion, and Hatred, in the Breasts of those who are sure to be condemned by their own Law, for want of Love and Charity. And it ever so happens, as it hath been manifested by constant Experience, that more Violence, (which hath now for many Ages passed for *Zeal*, That more Violence, I say,) is shewn for these Additions, and for these lesser, and undetermined Matters, in which the Difference lies, than for the most fundamental Points of Faith, or the most necessary Points of Practice. In the Practical Duties, especially, Men seem easy enough: and would fain have it thought that the vilest, and most enormous Crimes are more tolerable in themselves, and more inoffensive and harmless to public Soci-

Society; than a Difference in the least of their Additions. S E R M.

II.

The greatest (I would to God I could say the *only*) Instances of this, are to be seen where the *Romish Religion* is spread. Ask one of that Religion, Why so much Barbarity and Inhumanity is exercised; and an eternal War sworn against some sort of *Christians*? Why are they hated, tormented, banished, imprisoned, and put to Death? Do they not believe in God the Father Almighty, and in *Jesus Christ*? Do they not profess it to be their Faith, that there is but one God; that this God sent his Son *Jesus Christ* into the World to save Sinners; that He lived and died, and arose again and ascended up into Heaven to this Purpose? And that He will come again to judge the World; and that there is a future State of Rewards and Punishments? Or, are they wicked and debauched, immoral and vicious to that degree, that you fear the Vengeance of Heaven will fall on you, if you do not shew your Detestation of them? What Answer will you receive from him? There are few of them that would blush to tell you: (and yet who could do it without blushing?) “ These
“ are not the Things we so much concern our-
“ selves about. These Persons you speak of,
“ believe all this and more; and their Conversa-
“ tions may perhaps be regular and exact. But
“ this

S E R M. " this is not enough. They do not believe the
 II. " Change of the Elements into *Christ's* natural
 ~~~~~ " Body and Blood in the Eucharist. They do  
 " not hold themselves obliged to believe what-  
 " ever the Church shall recommend to them.  
 " They do not believe the Pope, or General  
 " Councils, infallible. They hold not the  
 " State of Purgatory. They will not invoke  
 " Saints and Angels: Or pray for the Dead.  
 " And therefore they are thus used." Now  
 these, and the like, are their own Inventions,  
 and Additions to the Law of *Christ*: and yet  
 these Articles are the Standard of their Love,  
 or Hatred; and always determine their Beha-  
 viour to other *Christians*, whether it shall be  
 human or inhuman, civil or barbarous.

But we must not be so partial to ourselves,  
 as to confine this Observation to that Church;  
 or to such Additions, or Points not essential, as  
 have been determined by it. I fear it will be  
 found, that too many who profess to have re-  
 formed from that *Church*, still retain too much  
 of the Spirit of it; and too often make their  
 own Systems and Notions the Measure of their  
 Affections; and confine their cordial Love,  
 and Christian Charity, within the Bounds of  
 their own Creed, or Manner of Worship.  
 It is certainly true, that there have not been  
 greater Hatreds, or more unchristian Malice,  
 amongst *Christians*, than what have sprung  
 from

from this Root: And therefore, this unhappy Consequence of *Christianity* must be charged, in great Part, upon those *Christians*, who, not being content with the Simplicity of *Christianity*, as they found it in the Gospel, have been perpetually making Additions to it, according to their own various Opinions, or Designs.

5. *Fifthly*, Another Consideration near akin to this, is, that this Unhappiness amongst *Christians* hath chiefly proceeded from Men's mistaking the Nature, and main Design of *Christianity*. Did Men but understand and consider that it was not the great Design of the Christian Religion to make all the World of one Opinion, in Things of little Moment: but that it was reveled from Heaven, chiefly to restore the Worship of the *one Supreme God*, in Spirit and in Truth; and to teach Men to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this World; they could not act the Part they so often do. Did Men but consider, that the great Branch of Christian Duty, is Love, and Good-nature, and Humanity; and the distinguishing Mark of a *Christian*, an universal Charity; they could not but own that *Jesus Christ* came to plant and propagate these in the World. And then, they would abhor the Thoughts of making any Thing in his Institution an Engine of

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Strife, and Malice, and Inhumanity. Then, they would not think all Things lawful against those that differ from them; nor themselves obliged to crush and ruine them. Then, the Contention between Men of various Minds would not be, who should have the Power of oppressing their Brethren: But the Contest would be, who should love most; and who should give the most expressive Demonstrations of an unconfined Good-nature, and an unbounded Charity. But these, I fear, are but Dreams and Wishes!

It would sound something strange to say that the chief Design of *Christianity* is too plain to be understood, and too evident to be seen: And yet it is true, that the very Plainness of this makes it the less attended to. Such a Love there is in Men to something not so easy to be understood; nor of such Importance: and such a readiness to find out other Designs of *Christianity*, more agreeable to their own worldly Projects!

Can any of all the fiery Zealots in the World shew us any Design more worthy of the Son of God's descending from Heaven, than the planting of Love, and Peace, on Earth? more beneficial to the whole Race of Mankind; more for the Ease and internal Quiet of our own Breasts; or a better Preparative for the calm and serene Joys of Heaven; for the Fruition of that God who is Love, and of the  
Company

Company of those blessed Spirits, who are the Witnesses, and Ministers of his Love? E R M.  
II.

Can they shew us any Design more plainly revealed in the Gospel; or any one Duty there laid upon us, to which this must at any time give place? If they cannot, then nothing can ever release us from our Obligation to Love, and Charity; or ever excuse the least degree of Hatred, and Malice, and Violence; much less of Barbarity and Cruelty. Nay, how can it possibly be thought by any *Christians*, that a Religion, which lays such Strefs upon Peace, and Love; which dwells so eternally upon them; which was founded in Love, and so manifestly designed for the propagating and establishing Good-nature in the World: How can it be imagined, that there is any Thing in this Religion, that can give them occasion to hate, or disturb, or persecute, any of their Brethren? Unless they can think that it self is so framed as to destroy it's own Design; to oppose it's own main End, and Purpose; and to dissolve the Obligations of it's own Precepts. These Things are inconsistent, and too absurd to be fastened upon *Jesus Christ*, by any who believe him sent of God. And would Men seriously attend to the Design of the Gospel, they could not fix such Absurdities upon it: Religion would be free from the Scandal of being the Occasion of Hatred, and Disturbance, and



SERM

II.



Persecution, amongst Men; and the World would be free from the Trouble and Plague of them; Society would be happy; and God would be glorified in the universal Practice of Love and Peace.

Having thus endeavoured to give some Account, by what Men, and by what Methods, *Christianity* hath been made the Occasion of Quarrels, and Hatred, and Persecutions, in the World; and by what Means it hath been too much verified, that *Christ came not to send Peace, but a Sword*: I shall now, as I proposed in the last Place,

IV. Make some proper Observations, and draw some useful Inferences, from what hath been said. And,

*First*, Since it is plain from what hath been before said, that *Christianity* hath been the Occasion of Disturbances, Hatreds, and Persecutions, in the World; not by means of any Thing contained in itself naturally tending this way; but by means of the Perverseness, and Weakness of Men, and particularly of *Christians* themselves: Let us learn to distinguish between *Christianity*, and *Christians*; and not blame the one, for the Faults of the other. Were there any thing in the Design or Doctrine of the Gospel, naturally tending to disturb and unsettle the World; it ought in reason



son to lie under the Imputation. But it ought not to suffer under such a Scandal, if it be itself wholly free from such a Tendency. Notwithstanding this, it hath fared with *Christianity*, as it hath done with many other Professions: The Faults of those who have professed it, have reflected Shame, and brought an ill Name, upon it, whilst it utterly discountenances, and absolutely forbids, those very Faults.

Men take it usually very ill, in the Affairs of this World, that any Profession or Calling amongst them, should suffer Disgrace, and fall in the good Esteem of other Men, for the sake of the Crimes, and ill Behaviour, of some of those who pretend to belong to it: And they always argue, that it is the most unjust Thing in the World, it should do so, unless it can be shewn, that it does command, or encourage, any such Practices; much more, when it condemns and threatens Punishment to them. And yet they scruple not to deal by the Christian Religion after the manner they think it hard their own secular Professions should be dealt with; and draw up an heavy Accusation against *that*, made up of a long Catalogue of the Crimes of its Professors.

Far be such unreasonable Proceedings from all who pretend to judge reasonably. Blame not the *Christian Religion* for what it most unwillingly,

S E R M. willingly, and against its own Injunctions, is  
 II. forced to be the Cause of; but blame the Per-  
 verseness of those, who, wittingly and willingly,  
 oblige it to be an Instrument to their Pur-  
 poses. Inveigh not against a Religion, which  
 is framed to conquer Mens Passions: But in-  
 veigh against the Passions of those, who will  
 not suffer it to conquer them; but press Re-  
 ligion itself into the Service of them. Say  
 not, that *Christianity* is not good, and of be-  
 neficial Influence upon the Happiness of the  
 World: But say, that Men will not suffer it  
 to shew its Power upon them; that Men will  
 not bear to be, what That would have them to  
 be. Be not ready to be scandalized at the Gos-  
 pel, because it hath thus sent, *not Peace, but a  
 Sword upon the Earth*: But be offended at  
 those who have brought this Evil to pass, sole-  
 ly for their own worldly Interest; in order to  
 promote their own wicked Ends, and to satisfy  
 their own private Views. *Wo be to the World  
 because of Offenses, for it must needs be that Of-  
 fenses come; but wo to that Man by whom they  
 come.* It must needs be, that the Passions and  
 Wickedness of Men will bring forth Variance,  
 and Disturbance, in the World: And this  
 will reflect a Dishonour upon the Religion it-  
 self, under which they hide themselves. But  
*Wo* to those Men who are the proper Cause of  
 this Unhappiness to their Fellow-Creatures;  
 and of this Objection against the Gospel.

I shall

I shall only here add one Observation, that E R M.  
 it cannot be a tolerable ground of Offense a- II.  
 gainst Religion, that something in it hath been  
 turned to evil Purposes, and to the Disquiet of  
 Mankind; because this is really an Argument,  
 that it is in itself good: It being certain, that  
 the better any Thing is, the more willing are  
 designing Men to hide their main Designs un-  
 der the Cover of it; and the more inclined to  
 use it as an Instrument to make the World  
 about them the more readily fall in with their  
 Measures.

This leads me, *Secondly*, to observe from  
 what hath been said, how much the best Things  
 may be abused; and to what ill Purposes the  
 Wickedness and Weakness of Men, can turn  
 the most excellent Institutions of God himself.  
 In his Dealings with Men, Almighty God  
 doth not actuate their Wills, or Resolutions,  
 with an irresistible Arm; but proposes to them  
 sufficient Arguments to receive what he offers  
 them, and sufficient Assistance to perform what  
 he commands: Still leaving to them a Place  
 for Reward, if they submit to him; or of  
 Punishment, if they do not. Here we have  
 an Instance (an almost incredible, and very  
 surprizing Instance) of the strange Perverse-  
 ness of human Nature, and the Ingratitude  
 of Men to the Love of God. He, in Mercy,  
 proposes a Revelation to them, perfectly qua-  
 lified



S E R M.

II.



lified to make them easy here, as well well as happy hereafter. Some not only reject it themselves, but hate, and persecute, and extirpate, those who preach it, and propose it to them. Others, indeed, receive it, and profess it: But, instead of conforming their Tempers and Lives, to its Precepts; and studying the Advantage, and Happiness, of the World, they live in, they presently turn their Thoughts upon what private Advantages they can make of it; what Account they can make it turn to; what there is in it, for their Ambition, or Covetousness, or Revenge, to employ in their Service; what there is in it proper for them to work with, in order to raise themselves and depress others.

Thus have the wicked Part of the World turned into Poison, and Ruine, what was designed for their Health, and Strength; and converted it into a common Plague and Disturbance, what was exactly qualified to establish, and confirm, human Society in Quiet, and Happiness. But whither at length will the Perverseness of Men proceed, when so sacred, and useful, a Thing hath not been able to withstand it? For what can be thought of, that is more truly qualified for other, and better Purposes; for the universal Interest, and Peace, of the World, than the Christian Religion? What more worthy of God to reveal;

or

or of Man to receive, and practise? And yet, what hath been ever more abused; or perverted to worse, and more detestable Purposes? But this, as it shews us the perverse Tendency of human Nature, when it is once debauched by worldly Principles, and drawn aside from the Paths of strict Virtue: So it leads us,

*Thirdly*, to consider what an Account some Men have to make: and what a Punishment *They* have waiting for them, who are guilty of so unpardonable an Abuse of God's Mercy in the Dispensation of the Gospel. In vain do Those who are the proper Causes of these unhappy Consequences of the *Christian Religion*, think to lie hid, or to escape free, with all the private Advantages they procure to themselves. In vain doth the *Atbeist*, who puts the Guise of Religion upon what He undertakes, flatter himself with the Hopes of Security, and Impunity. In vain do the Sceptics, and Irreligious Men, who colour over their Designs with something taken from *Christianity*, laugh inwardly at the Multitude, whom they have deceived with these Pretences. Almighty God sees it all: And knows the unfaithful Turnings and Windings of their Hearts: And treasures up all, against the Day of Accounts. And then, what Punishment can we believe too great, for such Hypocrisy, and such Crimes?

To

SERM.

II.



To them belongs the Guilt of greater Ingratitude, than can be expressed in Words; the Guilt of perverting an Institution from the Design of God, to the Purposes of the Devil; from the Purposes of Union and Quiet, to the Purposes of Division and Unhappiness. To them belongs the Guilt of scandalizing many against the Christian Religion: The Guilt of bringing a Disgrace upon it; and of recommending *that* to the Hatred and Aversion of many in the World, which, if it had not been for such professed *Christians*, might have made a lasting good Impression upon them, and have prevailed with them to the eternal Salvation of their Souls.

These Men indeed at present cannot be disturbed at the Thoughts of this: Because they can have no Sense of what they do not believe. And that they do not believe this, is plain from their Behaviour. For how can they pervert and abuse Religion to their own wicked Purposes; if they believe any thing of the Punishments it threatens, and the Terrors it proposes? But this Security, and false Peace, will not last for ever. Death will put a Stop to all their Projects: And after Death comes the Judgment; the Judgment before an All-knowing and Almighty Judge, *One* that cannot be imposed upon, and cannot be resisted; and  
One,

One, who will certainly punish them according to their Works. *They have their Reward* here, if their Pretences take, and their false Colours delude the World, for a while, at present: But the Scene will quickly change, from a State of Design and Hypocrisy, into a State of that Misery, which hath been denounced, and will certainly be executed, upon *Hypocrites*. It may, indeed, be true that they do some Service and Credit to *Religion*, if they be never discovered by Men: But if discovered, as they generally are, the Consequence of their *Hypocrisy* is perhaps more fatal to *Christianity*, than the most open and profligate Wickedness. For their *Hypocrisy*, or pretended Regard to Religion, being once seen through, necessarily brings a perpetual Scandal upon the Religion they profess, when they are once known to prostitute it to the Service of their own vile Lusts, and Passions, or to use it for the procuring great Temporal Advantages to Themselves, and numberless Miseries to Others. These Persons, therefore, must expect somewhat as Extraordinary in the Punishment of their *Hypocrisy*, as That hath been Extraordinary in its mischievous Influences upon the World, and its Disservice to Religion.

*Fourthly*, Since this is the Way of bad Men; and Religion, and the Church, are often made  
the




S E R M.

II.



the Pretense for very bad Things : It concerns others to be upon their Guard not to be deceived, as these are continually upon their watch to impose upon them. Next to the not being guilty of this themselves, the great Care of Men ought to be, that they be not led away by those that are so ; and so contribute by their Carelessness, or Easiness of Temper, to, what they would otherwise abhor, the Scandal of Religion, and the Disturbance of the Society they are related to. Why, indeed, should it not be accounted a Duty, to be as watchful to prevent such Mischiefs, as some are to bring them to pass ? To be as prepared to fence against them, as some are always to forward them ? Or, why should *honest* Men incur some Part of the Guilt of the *Wicked*, by not thinking it worth their while either to understand them rightly, or to oppose them heartily ?

*Fifthly*, and *Lastly*, Since the Guilt of those who have an Hand in making any thing in Religion subservient to the Purposes of Dissension, Hatred, and Persecution, is so great : Let us take care not to be of the Number of those who do this, in the least Degree imaginable. There hath been enough already done to verify this Prediction of our Lord's, that *He came not to send Peace but a Sword*. He will thank us, if we will at length leave off to prove the Truth

Truth of it by our Example. Enough of S E R M.  
Persecution, and Violence, and Hatred, hath II.  
been founded on Religion. Designing Men   
have cheated the World long enough : And  
long enough hath the *Gospel* lain under the  
Scandal of the Vices of others ; and of encour-  
aging those Passions which it came to tame.  
It is tyme now for *Christians* to consider that  
their Business is *Peace* ; and their Religion  
*Love* : And that *Christianity* is sufficiently qua-  
lified to make them taste of Happiness, even  
here below, if they do not themselves hinder  
it. Let us remember this : And think, whe-  
ther We can be too careful to do our Parts to-  
wards the retrieving the Good name of Reli-  
gion ; and the restoring it to its primitive and  
original Design.

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# S E R M O N III.

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Preached in the Parish Church of St. Peter  
*Poor, March 8, 1704-5.*

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The Anniversary of Thanksgiving for  
the QUEEN'S Accession to the Crown.

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P S A L M xcv. 2.


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*Let us come before his Presence with Thanksgiving.*

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SERM.

III.

 **W**E are this Day called upon by Authority, to celebrate before God the Accession of our Gracious QUEEN to the Throne of these Kingdoms: A QUEEN, whose admirable Prudence and Conduct; whose tender Care of all Her Subjects, and hearty Concern for their common Interest, have made Her the Delight of Her People, and given us abundant Reason *to come before the Presence of God with Thanksgiving.* And that we may pursue the true Design of this Day's Solemnity, without the Mixture of the least

least Indecency, or of any thing that may be displeasing to Almighty God; I design to offer some Considerations, which seem to me proper, and expedient for the end of our present *Assembly*: That we may neither shew our selves unthankful for the Blessing we truly enjoy under the happy Government of such a *Princess*; nor express our Thankfulness for them after an improper, or unbecoming manner. It would be base and unworthy in us, not to endeavour to make ourselves sensible of our own Happiness, in order to our offering the Thanks that are due to Almighty God, and to our paying the Acknowledgments, and Returns we owe to that Wisdom which now presides and governs in this Nation: And on the other hand, it would be much more unworthy of Men, and of *Christians*, to express our Resentments of the Blessings of this Day, after such a manner as is not agreeable to a true Sense of them, or doth not suit with the Solemnity of our Appearance before God. It being my Design, therefore, to guard against both these Evils, I beg leave to mention to you as well the improper, as proper ways of celebrating this Day; that so we may take care to avoid the *One*, and choose only the *Other*. And,

I. I shall



SERM.

III.



I. I shall but just but you in mind, in general, that all manner of Vice, and Wickedness, is utterly inconsistent with such Solemnities; and that the smallest degrees of Intemperance, Extravagance, and Debauchery, little become such a Day as this. It is an unpardonable Contradiction, to express our Gratitude to Almighty God by forgetting his Laws, and violating his Commandments; and an unaccountable Method of *Thanksgiving*, to affront and disobey our great *Benefactor*: And yet it is but too observable, especially on such *Festivals* as relate to the *Civil Estate* of the *Kingdom*, that many think they cannot appear joyful enough without casting off all regard to Sobriety, and letting loose the Reins to Intemperance. But all such Joy as disdains the Bounds of Religion, and Virtue, degenerates into Madness: And whilst it seems to express a Sense of God's Favours, and a Love to our Country, it is, in Truth, the greatest Demonstration of our Insensibility of the one, and our Enmity to the other; putting a stop to the gracious Design of future Mercies, and helping only to treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath. There being, therefore, nothing so incongruous and absurd, as to express a Thankfulness to God by wicked Actions; and a Love to our Country by contributing to the Debauchery, and

Ruine

Ruine of it; let all such Behaviour as is contrary to the Rules of Reason, and the Laws of the Gospel, be far banished from all who truly rejoice before God. But,

S E R M.

III.


II. With a more peculiar Relation to this Day, I cannot but observe, (and I hope without Offence to any) that it seems disagreeable to a true Sense of the Mercy of this Day, to celebrate the Accession of Her present *Majesty* to the Crown, with Reflections, and Satyr, upon the Memory of Her *Royal Predecessor*. It is the only Thing that casts a Shadow over the Brightness of this Day, that We could not enjoy an excellent *Princess*, without being deprived of an excellent *Prince*; that the same Day, which began the happy Reign of our great, and good, QUEEN, put a Period to the useful, and invaluable, Life of a great, and good, KING; that the same Hour which demanded Acclamations of Joy for the one, demanded Tears of Piety and Gratitude, for the other. Never was there a greater, and more dubious, Contest known between *Grief* and *Joy*, than on this Day: For never was there a Reign ended of more beneficial Influence upon these Nations, than that which this Day ended; and never was there a Reign begun, from which we could promise our Selves a greater Progress towards Happiness, than we

E

have

S E R M. have already experienced from that which this  
 III. Day began. If therefore, it were on any Account allowable to contaminate a Day of Joy with any Marks of Grief; surely it might be allowed to shed a Tear upon the Memory of a *Prince*, to whom, under God, we owe the Enjoyment of all we possess. And methinks, such a Tribute to his Name might be thought even an Honour paid to this *Day*, on which We should not now be Celebrating the Accession of an Excellent *QUEEN* to the Throne, had not He first sustained the Shock of our *Enemies*, and settled us upon that Foundation, which we now think of with so much Pleasure, and Security. Especially, since the carrying our Thoughts backward, can only serve to raise our *Thankfulness* to Almighty God, that, after he had deprived us of a Life, on which the Fate of *Europe* seemed, in human Appearance to depend, He was pleased to seat upon the same *Throne* a *Princess* so wise; so skilled in all the Rules of good Government; and so regardful of the true Interest of Her People, that Her Reign hath hitherto seemed only a glorious Continuance of the former.

Nothing indeed, can be more incongruous to the Duty of this Day, than to persecute the Memory; or to rake into any supposed Mistakes, and Mismanagements; or to fix any  
 Blot

Blot upon the Reputation of Him, by whom SERM.  
only it is, that this Day bears those Characters III.  
of Joy it hath now put on. And methinks,   
if nothing else; if neither Honour, nor Gra-  
titude to our late KING; yet Respect, and Vene-  
ration for our present QUEEN, if it be real,  
should secure His Name from Reproaches,  
who laid the Foundation of her Reign, and her  
Glories. Her Throne is settled upon the same  
Foundation, on which His was fixed: And  
can it be a proper Method of exalting *Hers*  
with Honour, to throw down *His* with In-  
dignity? Upon Her Accession to the Crown,  
She Her self styled Him, in an august Assem-  
bly, *the great Support not only of these King-*  
*doms, but of all Europe*: And can it become  
*Her* Day to contradict that glorious Charac-  
ter? Or can it be accounted an Honour to  
*Her*, to deny the Truth of her own solemn  
Words? And ever since She ascended the  
Throne, it hath been her Glory to pursue the  
Cause of her great *Predecessor*; to insist in the  
Paths which he had troden before Her; and  
to oppose the same common Adversary with  
the same Zeal, and Concern. How injurious,  
therefore, must it prove to the Glories of the  
*One*, to depress, and lessen the Glories of the  
*Other*? I would not willingly give leave to  
too severe a Censure: But there is too much  
Reason to fear that the same Persons, who



S E R M. can solemnize this Day with *Invectives* against  
 III. the late KING, may come in time to solemnize  
 ~~~~~ it with the like *Invectives* against the present  
 QUEEN; if She shall continue unmoveably to
 pursue the same hated Maxims of Government,
 and to speak too often, and too earnestly, of
Peace and Moderation.

But if such Persons think that the Glory of
 so great, and good, a QUEEN cannot be raised
 to a sufficient Highth, without depressing the
 Glory of her *Predecessor*; this is, of all others,
 the greatest Indignity they could offer to her
 self, and to her Day. For it is one principal
 Reason of our present *Thankfulness*, that our
 Excellent *Queen* abounds in so many Graces,
 and so many noble Accomplishments; is
 adorned with so great a degree of Conduct,
 and Wisdom; and appears so admirably fitted
 for Government, that She will ever shine il-
 lustriously by her own Light; that her native
 Excellencies will add a perpetual Grace to her
 Name: and that She stands not in need of
 any such poor, and inglorious, Artifices, to
 endear her to her People, or to make her Story
 full of Honour in future Ages. She possesseth
 what is sufficient to recommend Her to the Af-
 fections of all her good Subjects; and owes
 her Glories to her self, and not to the Defects
 and Faults of Others.

But it is no great Wonder that so great an
 Abuse

Abuse can be put upon this Day, since we find SERM.
 that some have their Understandings so strangely III.
 turned, that they cannot imagine a Veneration for Her present *Majesty*, consistent with a
 Respect to the Memory of Her *Predecessor*.
 I speak this with relation to such amongst us,
 as are not content with professing themselves
 hearty Friends, and Well-wishers, to that
 QUEEN, who began her Reign on this Day;
 but are often insinuating, after some manner
 or other, that Her secret Enemies are many,
 and especially amongst those, who profess the
 highest Respect to the Memory of Her *Prede-*
cessor. This seems to me so hard a Censure,
 and so little deserved, that I care not to speak
 as severely of it, as I justly might: But I must
 say, that I think it manifest, on the contrary,
 that Those who were truly *Friends* to the late
 Government, cannot be truly *Enemies* to this;
 and that Those, who were hearty Lovers of
 the late KING, can never, without renouncing,
 or contradicting their Principles, hate, or re-
 vile a QUEEN, who succeeds Him in the same
 glorious Designs; who hath the same Regard
 to the Rights and Liberties of Her Subjects,
 and the same Zeal against the great Adversary
 of both. We know, many who help to
 spread this Evil Report of their *Brethren*, are
 publick, and professed, *Enemies* to the present
 happy *Establishment*. It is wonderful that They

SERM. should think themselves of all others the fittest

III. Persons to give Informations of *Friends*, and

Enemies, to a Government which they cannot themselves wish well to. But it is much more wonderful, that Any who study the Preservation of the *Government*, and the Interest of the present *Governor*, can join in a Censure, which cannot but raise the strongest Jealousies against Those who have not deserved them; and greatly increase those mutual Animosities, which are already too violent amongst us. But I have suffered my self to be carried beyond my first Design, in Opposition to what seems contrary to Decency, and Gratitude, and to the Occasion of this Day. And I shall only add, that all I have now said hath proceeded, not only from a great Regard to the Memory of our late KING, which I am not ashamed to profess; but from a profound Veneration for our present QUEEN, whose Honour appears to me deeply concerned in it.

III. Having taken Notice of the Abuses of this Day, I come now to observe, that it is one very proper part of our present Duty to make ourselves sensible of the Mercy of God to us in the Accession of our Excellent QUEEN to the Crown; lest we should seem to draw near to him with our Lips, but to have our Hearts, far from him, whilst we pretend to commemorate so great a Blessing before him.

We

We need not doubt, but that, if our great, SER M.
 and common, Adversary had been to wish III.
 what, of all Things, He could have thought
 most conducive to the compassing the Ends of
 his boundless Ambition ; He would have wish-
 ed a Period to the Life of our late KING, who
 had so long stood resolute against his constant
 Attempts upon the *Rights* and *Liberties* of
Europe, and made it his whole Employment
 to prevent the Success of his *Mischief* as fast as
 He himself could contrive it. And we need
 not doubt but that, upon the Death of such
 a *Prince*, (so able, and so resolved, to oppose
 Him) He flattered Himself with a Train of
 uninterrupted Successes ; and a Series of future
 Conquests and Triumphs ; and imagined all
 Things bowing their Necks to his Authority ;
 and no Resistance but what He could despise,
 and easily break through. But Almighty God,
 who sees not as Man sees, nor judges as Man
 judges, quickly taught Him to think otherwise.
 By his good Providence our QUEEN was peace-
 ably seated upon the Throne ; inspired with
 the same Zeal against the common Enemy,
 that filled every Hour of the Life of Her *Pre-
 decessor* ; and quickly began to shew such Signs
 of Prudence, and Wisdom, and Conduct, as
 could not but convince Him how vain, and
 groundless his Confidences were. Abroad,
 Affairs have been managed with that singular,

SERM.

III.



and wonderful Prudence, which hath drawn after it such an Instance of Success, as hath been seldom known in History. At Home, lest the unhappy Temper of this Nation should give too much Advantage to the *Enemy*, universal Love, and Peace, and mutual Benevolence, have been recommended, and cultivated. Great and signal Acts of Piety and Charity have been performed, to invite down the Blessing of Heaven: And we have been taught by the highest Example, our Duty, and our Interest. Upon all which Accounts certainly we have the greatest Reason to pay our hearty Acknowledgments to Almighty God, and to *come before his Presence with Thanksgiving*. For by his Providence Princes reign. He laid the first Foundation of all their Accomplishments, and all their Designs. He orders the Scene of Affairs so, as that all the Success and Happiness that follows is owing originally to his infinite Wisdom, and Goodness. If therefore, He hath been good to us after so extraordinary a manner; and disposed Things so, in this Critical Juncture, that we must all acknowledge, we want neither Conduct and Courage in our *Armies* Abroad, nor Wisdom and Temper in our *Counsels* at Home; let us be sensible of so great a Blessing as the Accession of a QUEEN to the Throne, who so gloriously maintains the Cause delivered down

to Her ; so wisely governs at Home, and so successfully wars Abroad.

ERM.

III.

And it will increase our Sense of the Mercy of God towards us in her Accession to the Crown, to consider that happy Constitution, and Frame of Government, which is by this preserved, and confirmed, to Us. She is the first upon the Throne, since the Settlement of the *Succession* in the Protestant Line : and She hath demonstrated already to the whole World her Hatred of *Tyranny* and *Slavery*, and her tender Regard to *Liberty*. So that we may say, we owe to her Reign the Confirmation, and Establishment, of our happy Estate. Happy indeed, if we look Abroad, and compare it with the miserable Estate of such as are under no Law but *Arbitrary Will* ; and know not what it is truly to possess any Thing ; or so much as to enjoy the Worship and Religion they approve. We can have no proper Notion, at this distance, of what hath been suffered, throughout *Europe*, from the ungovernable *Excess* of *Power*, and the burning *Zeal* of *Popery*. When we felt in ourselves but the Approaches towards what is known in other Lands, there was hardly a Man to be found that did not disdain the unnatural Principles of a servile Obedience : Nay, many of Those who afterwards returned in their Hearts to *Egypt*, permitted Nature to have so much force

S E R M.
III.




force upon them, as that they invited Relief and Assistance; and themselves laid the Scene of our Deliverance. And could we see what others at this Moment feel under the Influences of *Ungoverned Power*, and *Bigotry*, we could not but retain a just Value for our own Happiness; and a just Sense of the Favour of God, in granting us a QUEEN as truly concerned for the *Rights*, and *Liberties*, and *Religion*, of her Subjects, as her Subjects themselves could wish. It is an invaluable Blessing, and above all the Grandeur, and Magnificence of *Arbitrary Power*, that we can dare to say, we enjoy any Thing, and have a Title to it; that we can demand it of any that lay violent Hands upon it, and can call for legal Redress of the Injuries of the greatest Persons amongst us. And it is an incomparable Happiness, that we enjoy the *Religion* we approve; that we can meet undisturbed for the Worship of God, and freely exercise our common Devotions. And what is to be seen answerable to this, in any Country, where there is not the Liberty of Men's *Persons*, and *Estates*, and *Religion*? Nothing but a mock Outside of Greatness (falsly so called) in the *Prince*, loved only by Slaves; but hated, and abhorred, and perhaps marked out to Destruction, if there remain in Any a Sense of *Freedom*, and of the Dignity of Human Nature? What can compensate



penfate the Loſs of ſo ſingular an Happineſs as we enjoy, and how great ſhould our Senſe of it be? The peculiar Glory of the *Crown* of theſe *Realms* is this, that it is enriched with all thoſe Powers which are neceſſary for the Deſenſe of the Subject, and the true Greatneſs of the *Prince*; and that it wants only Thoſe that tend to the Deſtruction of Liberty, and the Unhappineſs of thoſe that wear it. As therefore, it muſt be the Intereſt of the *Crown* itſelf, not to affect *New*, and *Illegal Powers*; ſo it is manifeſtly the Intereſt of every Subject, that the *Crown* ſhould never be robbed of the *Powers* it now poſſeſſeth. For whenever this comes to paſs, it may be found as great an Injury to the juſt Liberties of the *Subjects* of this *Kingdom*, as *Arbitrarineſs* in the *Crown* itſelf. For then the happy Balance is broken, that keeps all Things in an even State: And ſuch an Alteration in ſo nice a Conſtitution muſt needs give a terrible Shock to the *Publick Happineſs*. And I may add, that Experience hath ſhewn, that nothing is ſo agreeable to the Welfare of theſe Kingdoms, as the ancient Conſtitution preſerved unviolated; and that whoever have endeavoured to break in upon it, either by infringing the Liberties of the *Subject*, or by too great Encroachments upon the legal Province of the *Prince*, have equally failed of Succeſs; have never been able to eſtabliſh their own private

Scheme,

S E R M. *Scheme*, but fallen a Sacrifice to their own Imprudence. This being, therefore, our peculiar Happiness; and an Happiness which this Day confirmed to us; it becomes us this Day to fill our Minds with a Sense of it, and to express our Thankfulness for it. But last of all,

III.  IV. If we be truly thankful to Almighty God for so excellent a Governor as this Day ascended the Throne; it is most agreeable to this Solemnity, to kindle in our Breasts a strong Resolution, and a zealous Desire, of making Her a Great, and Glorious QUEEN. Not by prostituting our *Rights* and *Liberties* to Her Will; (an Offer which She hath Greatness enough to disdain;) for that would be to give Her only the external Appearance of Grandeur: but by contributing all we can to her true Happiness, and Satisfaction. To make ourselves a happy People by the Universal Practice of all that is virtuous and praise-worthy; This is truly to make our QUEEN happy. For how can it be that the Ruler of a religious People should not be happy? And such a Ruler, as knows the Value and Importance of Virtue, and Religion? But if You would be more particular, She Herself hath directed You to a Method, in which you cannot fail of making Her a happy and glorious QUEEN. Pursue the
Paths

Paths of Peace, and Union ; Love, and Concord ; avoid all Quarrels, and mutual Dissensions ; entertain Candour, and good Nature, and a true *Christian* Moderation : And as this will make You a *Happy People*, so You have Her own Royal Word for it, *This will make Her a Happy Queen.* Indeed She seems to have ascended the Throne in order to compose the unhappy Heats and Violences amongst us : And if Her Hand do not heal our miserable Breaches, I fear no other may have the like Advantages ; or any Possibility of attempting it without raising Jealousies, and Passions, and meeting with insuperable Difficulties. She hath not been wanting, on all Occasions, to make this the Subject of Her publick Conversations with Her Subjects : And, as if nothing delighted Her more than the Thought of Planting, and Establishing Peace amongst Her People, She constantly dwells upon it, and is ever inculcating it. *Peace* was the Subject of that last most affectionate Speech, which was the Legacy, as it were, of Her *Predecessor* to these distracted Kingdoms : And She hath, with great Zeal and Earnestness, pursued the same Divine Subject. And can it become those who pretend any Love to Her Majesty, to neglect all Her passionate Entreaties, and instead of *Peace*, to sow the Seeds of *Discord* in the Land ? Far be this from any such ! If they love

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III.
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SERM. not the good Work of Peace inwardly; yet,
 III. let the Respect they profess for that great Name
 which gives Credit to it, engage Them not to
 oppose and discourage it; lest, while they pro-
 fess a Veneration for the QUEEN, they should
 seem to renounce it all in their Actions.

To conclude all, Let us value our Happi-
 ness in such a QUEEN, and pay the profoundest
 Respect to so much Merit; Let us assist Her
 with all Readiness against the common Adver-
 sary of Her Throne, and our own Peace;
 Let us make Her the QUEEN of a religious
 and united People; and Let us pray to God
 long to preserve Her a publick Blessing to these
 Kingdoms, and the Guardian of the Liberties
 of all *Europe*, and finally to recompense the
 Cares and Labours of Her earthly Crown,
 with a *Crown* of eternal Glory in the World
 to come.

S E R M O N I V.

Preached before the Right Honourable the
Lord-Mayor, &c. September 29, 1705.

R O M A N S xiii. 1.

Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.


IN the seven first Verses of this Chapter, S E R M.
the Duty of *Subjects* to Persons in Autho- I V.
rity is plainly laid down; and the End of
all *Government*, and the Duty of all *Governors*,
plainly implied. And it is my Design to draw
some useful and proper Observations from what
the Apostle hath here delivered upon these two
Heads,

I. *With respect to Governors.* And,

II. *With respect to Subjects.*

I. *With respect to Governors.* And here,

1. The *first* Thing I observe, is, That the
Apostle declares that they are *ordained of God*,
ver. 1. That their Authority is the *Ordinance*
of God, ver. 2. That they are the *Ministers of*
God, ver. 4, 6. And since an *Apostle* hath so
far

S E R M. far concerned himself with the matter of Government, as to say this ; it cannot be amiss in
 IV.  Us, who are to be guided by his Directions, to examine, in what Sense this must be understood. Now, one would think it next to impossible, that any should understand these, and the like Expressions, to signify that God had himself appointed, for all the Kingdoms of the Earth, one particular Form of Government ; and that all Deviations from that, or Alterations in it, are unlawful, as they are Transgressions of the positive Institution of Almighty God. For I may, I think, venture to say, that there is not the least Footstep of this divine Institution in all the Accounts we have of the Dealings of Providence with Mankind ; nor the least Ground for such an Opinion from *History*, or the *Reason* of the Thing. And in the Words of the *Apostle* now before us, supposing he had confined them to the Form of Government then in being at *Rome*, can any one imagine that he intended to declare that the *Roman Emperors*, who at first manifestly usurped and maintained their Authority by force of Arms, had their Commission immediately from God ? Can any one imagine that *He* would not have said the same Things, had the *Republic* continued in all its former Rights, and antient Liberty ? Or that he would not
 have

have pressed Obedience and Submission upon the Subject, from the same Topics? Nay, that he meant this of all sorts of *Supreme Powers*, and of *Magistrates* in all Forms of *Government*, is evident from this, which he makes, as it were, the Ground of all these Forms of Expression, *ver. 1. That there is no Power but of God*: Which certainly extends equally to all who are possessed of any sort of Power, to be exercised for the Good of the Public, and to all Species of *Governments*. So that it cannot be meant here of any one Form, that it is *of God*, in any other Sense, but that in which it is true of all. And it being true of all, in no other Sense but this, That no Persons are possessed of any Governing Power for the Good of Human Society, but by the Providence of God, and by his Will either permitting or decreeing it: It can in no other Sense be here meant of any one sort of *Governors*, that they have their Authority from God. It is his Will certainly, that there should be *Government* in Human Societies, for the Peace, and Happiness, of Mankind. And so all Governors, of what sort soever, may be said to be *ordained by God*, because it is his Will that there should be Governors. They may be stiled the *Ministers of God*, because they act his Pleasure whilst they do the Duty

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SERM. of good Governors. And their Authority
 IV. may be said to be the *Ordinance of God*, because it is his Will that some Persons should be vested with Authority, for the good of Human Society. And thus St. *Peter* seems to understand this Matter, in his first *Epistle*, Chap. ii. 13. where he expressly calls the *King*, and *Governors* under Him, by the Name of an *Human Ordinance*, because the particular *Forms of Government* are of Human Determination: And makes them no otherwise of Divine Appointment, but by saying, *ver. 15.* That it is the *Will of God* they should be obeyed. Nay, it is evident that what St. *Paul* saith here, is spoken of all in Power and Authority; of the lowest Degree of *Magistrates*, as well as the highest *Prince* upon Earth. They are all equally *ordained by God*; their Authority equally the *Ordinance of God*; and themselves equally the *Ministers of God*. But these Expressions cannot be meant of *Inferior Magistrates*, in any other Sense, than as they are by God's Providence possessed of Power and Authority; and as it is God's Will they should be obeyed in the due Execution of their Office: And therefore, cannot be meant of the *Highest*, in any other.

2. We may observe that it is declared here, That the sole End and Business of all *Governing*

ing Power, is to consult the good of human Society, by maintaining Peace and Virtue in it, ver. 3. *Rulers*, i. e. those who faithfully perform the Office of *Rulers*, are not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil. And ver. 4. He, that is, One who is truly a Governor, is the Minister of God to thee for Good, and the Minister of God likewise in another Sense, viz. A Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth Evil. And ver. 6. These Rulers are said to be continually attending upon this very thing. In which account of Governors it is not to be supposed that the *Apostle* meant, that All of them did always perform this good Part; but that this was their great Business, and the only End of their Institution, as He makes it the Ground of the Obedience to be paid to them. You see here, that He doth not give an account of the *Princes* and *Governors* of this World, as of Persons exalted by the immediate Direction of Heaven, to a highth above their Neighbours, to be Arbitrators, at their own Pleasures, of the Lives and Fortunes of their Fellow-Creatures, and to receive the servile Homage of whole Nations; but as of Persons called by the Providence of God to a difficult and laborious Task; not to live in Ease and Delicacy, but to watch Day and Night for the good of that Society in which


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they preside ; to be distinguished indeed from others by the Ensigns of Greatness and Authority, but *this only* to make them more capable of serving the Public, and consulting the Interest of the Whole. Their Office indeed is a glorious Office : But the *Glory* of it doth not consist in the outward Majesty of the *Governor*, and the Servility of the *Subject* ; but in the Happiness, and Peace, that is derived from the Cares and Labours of the *Supreme Head*, to all the Members of the *Body Politic*. And that *Governor* who contradicts the Character here laid down by St. *Paul* ; who is not a *Terror to evil Works*, but to good : who is not the *Minister of Good* to the Virtuous, and of *Vengeance* to the Wicked only ; and who is not continually *watching* for the Good and Happiness of human Society, is not the *Governor* whom St. *Paul* means in this Place, or to whom He here presses Obedience : And much less, if he manifestly act contrary to the only End of his Institution ; and endeavour to ruine the Happiness of that *Society*, over which he is placed. And this may serve to explain yet farther, in what Sense *these higher Powers are from God*, viz. As they act agreeably to his Will, which is, that they should promote the Happiness and Good of human Society, which St. *Paul* all along supposes them to do. And consequently,

quently, when they do the contrary, they cannot be said to be from God, or to act by his Authority, any more than an inferior Magistrate may be said to act by a Prince's Authority, whilst he acts directly contrary to his Will. Having thus laid before you what the Apostle hath here delivered, with respect to *Governors*; I come now, as I proposed,

S E R M.
IV. ¶


II. To consider what is here said, *With respect to Subjects, and their Duty.* And,

I. The Duty of *Submission*, and *Non-resistance*, is laid down in such absolute Terms, that many have been induced from hence to think, That the Christian Religion denies the Subject all Liberty of redressing the greatest Grievances. Thus, *ver. 2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation.* And, *ver. 5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake;* i. e. Not only for fear of Punishment, but out of a Sense of Duty. Those who do not examine into the Foundation upon which the *Apostle* builds this Doctrine, and into the Whole of what he delivers, may indeed be apt to think, that in these Words there is little Relief allowed to *Subjects*, though lying under the greatest Oppressions imaginable:


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And yet methinks, on the other hand, if the *Apostle* had done nothing but enforced the Duty of *Obedience* upon the Subject, it would be reasonable to judge, from the Nature of the Thing, and the Absurdities of the contrary; that He meant this only as a general Rule in all ordinary Cases, rather than to imagine that He should absolutely conclude whole Nations under Misery and Slavery without hopes of Redress. But I observe,

2. That the *Apostle* doth himself so explain his own Doctrine in this very Place, by the Reasons he gives for this *Obedience* in *Subjects*, and the Account he gives of the Duty of *Governors*, as to leave Subjects all the Liberty that they can reasonably desire. For tho' he doth at first press upon them in unlimited Words, an *Obedience* and *Non-resistance* to the *higher Powers*; yet he afterwards manifestly limits this *Obedience* to such *Rulers*, as truly answer the End of their Institution. The Reason He gives for *Submission* is this, *ver. 3. For Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil*; and *ver. 4. Their Business is declared to be the Execution of Wrath upon him that doeth Evil*; and the Necessity of *Submission* is inferred from hence, *ver. 5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake*: that is, it is your Duty to obey the

the *Supreme Power*, because the great End of SERM.
 all human *Authority* is the Good of the Public; IV.
 that honest Men may be protected in their 
 Properties; and all Violence, and Disorder, and
 Unhappiness in human Society be prevented
 and punished; and because it is your Duty to
 promote that good End. Now, this being the
 Argument of the *Apostle*, all that we can possi-
 bly collect from his Injunctions in this Place
 is this, That it is the indispensable Duty of
Subjects to submit themselves to such *Governors*
 as answer the good End of their Institution; to
 such *Rulers* as He here describes; such as are
not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil; such
 as promote the publick Good, and are *continu-*
ally attending upon this very Thing. To these
 the profoundest Reverence, and the lowest
 Submission is due, as to the greatest Blessings
 a Society can enjoy; and Resistance to these
 is a most unpardonable Sin. Thus far the *A-*
postle's Reasoning holds, and it holds equally
 under all Forms of Government. For the
 End of all Government is one and the same,
 whether it be lodged in the Breast and Will of
 a single Person, or in the united Counsels and
 Decrees of many. And if the *End* of it,
 which is the public Happiness of Mankind, be
 truly answered; all Disobedience, and Resist-
 ance, is inexcusable.

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The Argument indeed which the *Apostle* first uses for this *Obedience* in *Subjects*, seems distinct from this, *viz.* that their Governors are *of God*, and *ordained of God*, and the *Ministers of God*. But having shewn that the Meaning of this can only be, that it is his Will that they enjoy this Power for the public Good, it will only follow from hence, that therefore they are to be obeyed in the due Execution of his Will. As far as they deflect from his Will, so far they lose their Titles to these Declarations of the *Apostle*; and so far are they excluded out of his Argument, as He himself afterwards explains it. It is a good Argument, These Persons are the *Ministers of God* for the Happiness of human Society: Therefore, they must be obeyed. But it will not follow from hence, that Obedience is due to them, if they destroy, and ruine, the Happiness of human Society.

But let us suppose, that they are *of God* in the highest Sense possible; that by his immediate Direction, *They* particularly are appointed to Rule and Govern in the Kingdoms of this World. Well, let us then consider, for what End and Purpose, they are appointed to this Honour: And that, it is agreed on all Hands, is the public Happiness of Mankind. I cannot see, even upon this Supposition that

an

an unlimited Submission is due to them. For they were placed in Authority for this good End only ; and they had Power given them by God for this Purpose only. If therefore, They use their Power to any other Purpose ; to the Hurt and Prejudice of human Society, as they may do, unless they are immediately directed, and their Wills forced by God himself ; They act not in any such Instances by Authority from God, but contrary to his Will : Nor can they, in such Instances, be called his Vicegerents, without the highest Profaneness : And therefore to oppose them in such Cases, cannot be to oppose the Authority of God. Nay, a *Passive Non-resistance* would appear, upon Examination, to be a much greater Opposition to the Will of God, than the contrary. For though He himself, upon the present Supposition, appointed this Person to govern ; yet his chief Design in this, being the Good and Happiness of Society ; tamely to sit still, and see that entirely ruined and sacrificed to the irregular Will of one Man, seems a greater Contradiction to the Will and Design of God, than any Opposition can be : For it is a tacit Consent to the Ruine and Misery of Mankind, whose public Peace and Happiness is the sole End of Government ; as well, if it be appointed by God himself, as if it be purely of human

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IV.

SERM. man Institution. But the *Apostle* makes no
 IV. such Supposition as this, but only determines,
 that it is the *Ordinance of God*, that there
 should be *Governors*; and that as long as they
 act agreeably to the End of their Institution,
 it is a great Sin to disobey, or resist them. We
 may judge from what I have said, how little
 Ground there is from any thing here delivered
 by *St. Paul*, to argue to so unlimited a Sub-
 mission as some inculcate. For we see, he
 hath his Eye all the Way upon the End of all
 Government; and founds his Precepts upon
 this Supposition, that the *Rulers* answer that
 good End. If they do not, or if they set them-
 selves to contradict it by Oppression, Violence,
 and Injustice; by invading and destroying the
 public Happiness, and by bringing on public
 Miseries; the *Apostle* seems not to think of
 recommending Submission to the Subject. For
 whilst he commands Submission, he puts no
 Case of *Princes* acting contrary to the Purpose
 of their Institution, and the sole Business of
 their Office; much less of *Princes* who make
 an express Contract with their People, and take
 solemn Oaths to preserve their Rights and Li-
 berties; and afterwards break through all these
 Ties to invade their Happiness. Nor doth he
 mention any thing of a *Passive Submission* in
 such Cases; but plainly leaves Nations to the
 Dictates

Dictates of common Sense, and the powerful Law of Self-preservation: And this, under all Forms of Government equally. For the most Arbitrary *Prince* in the World hath no more Right to make his Subjects Miserable, than the most *Limited*; though the one may attempt it with greater Aggravations than the other.. The former is tied up by the Laws of Nature and Reason, and obliged, by the very End of his Exaltation; as truly as the latter is by written Laws, or by solemn Promise: and Submission to the one, in Instances of Violence and Oppression, is no more due, than Submission to the other. For though his Authority in carrying forward the *End* of his Power, cannot be resisted without the highest Guilt; yet his Power in acting contrary to that *End* may be opposed without the Shadow of a Crime; nay, with Honour and Glory. He is secure no farther than Force and Power secure him; and what he gets by Violence may be demanded again, and can only be maintained by the same Violence, which first put him in the possession of it. And as this is true of an absolute Monarch; so is it as true, that, should all who are possessed of Power, in any other Form of Government, consent, and agree to enslave the People committed by Providence to their Care, and to make

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make them miserable; there is nothing in Nature, or in the Christian Religion, that can hinder that People from redressing their Grievances, and from answering the Will of Almighty God, so far as to preserve and secure the Happiness of the public Society.

But some may say, Where then is the great Virtue of *Submission* to *Governors*, if it be to be practised towards none but such as answer the End of their Institution: But it is easy to reply, That there is an indispensable Duty upon all, *Subjects*, as well as *Others*, to regard the public Interest; and if their Submission help to destroy and ruine that, their Submission cannot be a Virtue. It is due to *Governors*, not for their own sake, but merely for the sake of *public Happiness*; and therefore, can only be praise-worthy when it joins to promote that; and must degenerate into a Crime, (tho' it may be accompanied with many Virtues) when it forsakes the View of that, and betrays it into the Hands of Ambition and Violence.

The great Objection against this, though it be all founded upon the Will of God, who sincerely desires the Happiness of *public Societies*, is this, That it may give occasion to *Subjects* to disturb and oppose their Superiors. But certainly, a Rule is not therefore bad, be-
cause

cause Men may mistake in the Application of S E R M.
it to particular Instances; or, because evil I V.
Men may, under the Umbrage of it, satisfy
their own Passions, and unreasonable Humours;
though these latter, as they are disposed to
public Disturbances, would certainly find out
some other Pretense for their Behaviour, if
they wanted this. The contrary Doctrine to
what I have been delivering, we know, by an
almost fatal Experience, may be very much
abused; and yet that is not the Reason why it
ought to be rejected, but because it is not true.
Every Man is to give an Account for his Sins :
And the Guilt of those, who, under any Pre-
tense whatsoever, disturb the Government of
such as act the Part of good *Rulers*, is so great,
that there cannot be a stronger Motive than
this against Resistance and Opposition to such.
For they that resist shall receive to themselves
Damnation, is pronounced against such Resis-
tance; and if Men will not regard such a
Declaration, who can help it? The Truth
ought not to be concealed, or to suffer in the
Opinions of Men, for the sake of such an ac-
cidental Inconvenience.

Thus I have endeavoured to give a just
Account of what *St. Paul* hath, in this *Chap-
ter*, delivered concerning *Governors* and *Subjects*.
And though some may perhaps be apt to call
this

SER M. this by the Name of *Politics*; and to censure
 IV. it as Foreign to our Office, and this Place,
 (which they are sure to do then only when
 their own Notions are contradicted; yet I
 must declare, that I cannot think it an unbecoming, or even an unnecessary Part, of our Care, to settle the Measures of Christian Duty in all Cases, or to endeavour to give a true Explication of what so great an *Apostle* hath delivered with some Vehemence, and as a Matter of great Importance. All that I have now attempted, is to explain what an inspired Person wrote: And if this Explication be just, the Censure must light at last upon the *Apostle* himself; who, I cannot but think, knew very well what became his Office, and what belonged to his Province.

But though I have finished what I at first proposed, yet I still intreat your Patience, whilst I offer to you some farther Considerations not unsuitable to the present Occasion. And these are such as naturally flow from what hath been discoursed concerning the *End* and *Purpose* of all Government, whether that of *Princes*, or that of inferior *Magistrates*; and will serve to give us a compleat Idea of a good *Governor*. As,

1. It is highly requisite that all in Authority should be happy in a *public Spirit*, and a true
 Regard



Regard to the public Interest. For it being the only End for which they are cloathed with Authority, to serve the Public, and promote the Happiness of That: if they be led by private Interests of their own; if they be Slaves to Covetousness, or Ambition, or Effeminacy; if there be any thing in the World which they have more in their Eye, than the Advantage of human Society; This must warp them extremely from the main design of their Institution. And, as far as they are tainted with a vicious *Self-interest*, so far do they decline from the Dignity of their Character. But when their Breasts are thoroughly fired with a Love to the Public Interest, and a Resolution of prosecuting *that*; happy is the Nation that obeys such a *Prince*, and happy the Society that enjoys such a Governor. But,

2. There ought to be also in a *Governor* a deep Sense of Religion, of the great Importance of Virtue, and of the bad Influence and Malignity of Vice and Immorality. For since one great End of his Office is the *Punishment of those who do Evil*, and the *Praise of them who do Well*: there will be but little Heart to prosecute this, unless there be first a full Persuasion that there is an essential Difference between Good and Evil; that the Practice of all Virtue will make a Nation happy; and

SERM. and the Practice of Vice derive Curses and
 IV. Ruine upon a People, as well in the Nature of
 the Thing it self, as in the Decree of Almighty
 God. A Ruler that firmly believes this, will
 act his Part with some Zeal and Concern ;
 and it will tenderly affect his Mind, to see
 his Country likely to be undone by Debauchery:
 And He will employ his Thoughts Day
 and Night, how to reform the Manners of
 Men ; or at least, how to put a stop to the
 Impudence of those who will not be reformed.
 But particularly,

3. There must be a great Love to Justice,
 and a great Regard to Peace. The one en-
 gages a *Governor* to do that which is exactly
 right between Man and Man ; and the other
 influences him to reconcile the contending and
 quarrelling Parts of Mankind ; and soften
 the Hearts of Men into Love and Friendship.
 This Justice, which I here speak of, though it
 must not act blindfold , yet it must be blind
 to all outward Regards, and all Persons :
 And nothing of Interest, or of Party, or of
 personal Respect or Prejudice, ought ever to
 sway in the Distribution of Rewards and Pu-
 nishments : Which do but little Service to the
 Cause of Honesty and Virtue, unless when it
 is apparent that they are dispensed for the sake
 of Virtue itself, and not on any base and sordid
 Account.

Account. And if the strictest Justice should once be disregarded, and unjust Judgments come into use ; the great End of *Magistracy* is perverted, and the Happiness of Society shaken : And every Step this Way would be a Step to public Misery. And then, where there is not a sacred Regard to *Peace*, there will be no Compassion for the Divisions and Heats of a Nation ; and consequently no Advances made towards an universal Love and Friendship: the want of which alone must one time or other bring about the Ruine of a Nation.

4. To all other Qualifications there must be joined a blameless Example. The Reason is, because every thing that tends to promote Religion and Happiness in a Society, is the Concern of all who have *Authority* in it. Now it is with Those who are to punish Vice, and protect Virtue, just as it is with Those who are to teach the Practice of Virtue, and the Abhorrence of Vice. It is an Observation easy and obvious to every Body, that those who are the *Preachers* of Righteousness do no great Service to the Cause, but perhaps the contrary, if their Examples unhappily contradict their Precepts. And it is certainly the same with respect to Those, whose Business it is to punish Vice. If, whilst they punish it in Inferiors, They themselves are known to be guilty of it, the

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Correction indeed may make the Offender avoid the Light; but it will never make him in Love with Virtue. He will be apt to think, He is punished only because He is Poor; and not considerable enough to be in Office himself: And may be hardened to Vice, whilst He sees Men making use of their Authority in punishing others, only as it were for a Screen to their own greater Indulgence.

You see from hence what a Concern there lies upon all in Authority from the Highest to the Lowest; that *Magistracy* is not a Matter of Pomp and Retinue to attract the Eyes, and raise the Wonder of the Multitude; but a Business of Labour and Difficulty, to be undertaken with Seriousness, and to be managed with the greatest Prudence and Conduct.

It is the invaluable Happiness of this Kingdom, to see all these *Qualifications* united in its *Supreme Governor*; who seems to know no greater Satisfaction than what arises from the good Estate of the Public, and who directs all her Cares, not to make herself Great, but her Subjects Happy. Such an Example, one would think, cannot but influence all who are in Authority under Her, to promote the same good End, the public Happiness. We are in many Things the Envy, as well as the Wonder, of other Nations. Our Liberties still preserved; Our Constitution still happily tempered;

pered; and the Profession of our Religion still secure. But we want many Things to make the Possession of these great Blessings certain and lasting to us; but especially an universal Practice of Virtue, and a Spirit of Peace and Love. It is your great Concern (I speak to all who bear any Office in this great City) to promote the Practice of Virtue, and Peace. The former is discouraged, and endangered, by every public Act of Prophaneness and Irreligion: which ought therefore, to be severely punished, lest the Poison should work itself insensibly from some Parts into the whole Body. And the latter is highly endangered by all Men of Passion and Violence; by those who vent such Principles as, in effect, call in question *Her Majesty's* Title to the Crown; by those who deride and expose the Principles upon which our present Establishment, and all our future Hopes, are founded; and by all whose Business it is to raise mutual Jealousies and Heats amongst us. Such as these, it is too well known, discover themselves every Day in open Light. And shall not others be as ready to preserve the public Happiness, as these Men are to destroy it? Or, is there no Way of redressing such public and such destructive Evils? It is a Shame to a Nation not to have good Laws: But it is a much greater Shame to have them, and not to put them in

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Execution. It is a Shame to a Nation, that there should be any Persons belonging to it, so little sensible of the Happiness it enjoys, as to libel and disturb such a QUEEN, and such a Government : But it is a greater Shame, that no Method should be found of effectually punishing what so highly deserves it. Let it therefore appear, that you are truly sensible of the Nature and End of your Trusts, by your hearty Endeavours to promote the Happiness of the Public. Let a true Regard to that discover itself in all your Proceedings. Let your Examples allure to Virtue, as well as your Punishments deter from Vice. Let your Zeal discover itself against the Enemies of Religion, and of the public Peace. Let it be seen that you *bear not the Sword in vain*. Thus you will make *this City a Praise in the whole Earth*, and draw down Blessings from Heaven upon the whole Nation.

*The Happiness of the present Establishment, and
Unhappiness of absolute Monarchy.*

S E R M O N V.

Preached at the Assizes at Hertford, March 22,
1707-8.

I S A M. viii. 9.

*Now therefore, hearken unto their Voice: How-
beit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew
them the manner of the King that shall reign
over them.*

IT is my Design to take occasion from these S E R M.
Words, v.

I. To lay before you the *History* recorded
in this *Chapter*.

II. To apply it to *Ourselves*, and this whole
Kingdom, by some proper and useful *Observa-
tions*.

I. I beg leave to lay before you the *History*
recorded in this *Chapter*: And this will be
comprized under the *Four* following *Remarks*.

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I. We find the *Israelites*, after all the Miracles wrought by Providence in their behalf, so little sensible of the Difference between *Slavery* and *Liberty*, as to betray the greatest Uneasiness under a *Government*, in which *God* himself presided, and on all Occasions shewed himself in a peculiar manner their *King*. The Pretense indeed, was taken from the Wickedness of the *Sons of Samuel*, who took Bribes, and perverted Judgment, ver. 3, 4, 5. but it is manifest that their chief Design was not to rectify this, but to introduce the Scheme some amongst them had laid, and to indulge their own foolish and weak Desire, of being ruled after the manner of their *Neighbours*. For, 2. Instead of desiring a Redress of their Grievances, or leaving it to the Wisdom of *Almighty God* to prescribe a Remedy; they come to his *Prophet*, peremptorily demanding a *King to judge them like all the Nations round about*, ver. 5. that is, as appears afterwards, an *Absolute Monarch*, governing by his single Will, without the Restraint of any *Co-ordinate Legislative Powers*. The *Prophet*, in great Uneasiness, applies himself to *God*. Upon this Occasion therefore, we have the justest Reason to expect to know the Thoughts of *Almighty God* concerning *Absolute Monarchy*; whether those other Nations were subjected to it by his Original and Immediate Appointment; whether the

Lineal

Lineal Succession of Males ought inviolably to be preserved, upon Pain of incurring his Displeasure; whether he created Thousands of Men to be Slaves for the sake of the outward Grandeur of *One*, as weak and as mortal as themselves; whether this Form of Government be the greatest Security to the *Liberty* and Happiness of *Subjects*; and the like Opinions and Notions embraced by some Persons, since that Time. Now, upon enquiry, we find,

3. That *Almighty God* is so far from applauding this Form of Government as the *Best*, or as his own *Institution*; that he gives by his *Prophet* a very sad, and lamentable Account of the Miseries and Unhappinesses peculiarly belonging to it, and consequent upon the *Establishment* of it: Such an Account as must be a *Demonstration* to all, who have not the most unworthy Notions of *Almighty God*, that he could have no original Design of appointing such a Form of Government, sacredly and inviolably to be kept up in any Nation; much less, in all the Nations, of the World. This Account is set before the *Israelites* from the 10th Verse to the 19th, in which the *Prophet* doth not intend to insinuate that every particular *Absolute Monarch* will use his Power after so very ill a manner as is there described; but to paint before their Eyes some of the many

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fore Calamities, which are too probable Consequences upon the *Establishment* of *Absolute Monarchy* in any *Nation*: And these may be all summed up in one comprehensive Word, and that is, *Slavery*. *A State* opposite to *Liberty*, and void of *Property*; in the Description of which, *Subjects* are here represented as *Slaves* in their *Persons*; and their *Children*, their *Possessions*, and the *Labour* of their *Hands*, forced from them, usurped, and converted to the private use of their *Monarch*. This is set before the *Israelites*, as the *Condition* of *Subjects* under that sort of *Government* which they were now desirous of, in order to deter them from so foolish a Thought. But, the *People* still persisting, notwithstanding so plain a Representation; *Almighty God*, as a Punishment for their Folly, and former Ingratitude, under the *Best* of *Governments*, grants their repeated Desire; and resolves to establish the *Government* among *Them*, which they so much admired among their *Neighbours*, ver. 22.

But then in doing this, it is very remarkable, in the following *History*, that he doth not recur to the *Patriarchal Scheme*, so celebrated of later Years; that He doth not point out to them (which He could most easily have done) the *Eldest Son* of the *Eldest House*, amongst them, and command them to keep inviolably
to

to the *Male Line* in a *regular Descent*; but that, without mentioning any thing of this, He chooseth *Saul* in his *Father's* Life-time: after him, *David*, the Youngest of many Brethren; after him, *Solomon*, and his *Posterity*. So that, in this *Kingdom*, established by God Himself, it was so ordered, that there never was one *King* lineally descended of that *Branch*, which alone could lay claim to *Pre-eminence* and *Government* by *Right of Primogeniture*. It is a very unlikely matter, therefore, that the *Jews* could have any strong Impressions concerning this unalienable, unalterable *Right*, which They saw superseded for ever by God Himself, without any Notice taken of it; and much more so, to be sure, that the *Heathen Nations* should have any such Notion, who had so much less Light concerning the Will of God. But, to let this pass, it is certainly very well worth our observing, that, in this Part of *Sacred History*, and upon an Occasion (the only Occasion, I may say,) given to *Almighty God*, by Mankind, to declare his Mind plainly concerning the Institution of *Absolute Monarchy*; and the Usefulness of it to *human Society*; and the unalienable *Right of Primogeniture*; we meet with nothing but what tends to depress it lower than any other *Human Form*, and to induce us to think that it is no Part of God's

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God's *Institution*, that the Lives and Fortunes of the *Inferior* Part of Mankind must be sacrificed, at all Adventures, to the imagined *Right* of *First-born Males*. This I could not help taking notice of, whilst the Representation of this *History*, which I have made, is fresh in your Minds. But now I proceed, as I proposed, in the *second Place*,

II. To apply it to ourselves, and this whole *Kingdom*, by some proper and useful *Observations*. And these shall be such as are suitable, *first*, to the happy *Establishment* which we live under; and *secondly*, to the unhappy Notions of *some* amongst us.

First, The happy Estate of this *Island*, under the present *Establishment*, offers itself to our Consideration, and deserves, in a particular manner to be reviewed, and valued by us. In our *Government*, indeed, we do not come up to that Happiness the *Jews* enjoyed, before they extorted a *King* from Heaven. They were governed, in an extraordinary and particular manner, by *God* himself: And to be governed by *God*, is to be governed by a Being void of all Passion, and Prejudice, and Weakness; by a Being that could not injure them, either out of *Malice*, or *Ignorance*: and if any *Grievances* were permitted under



his Inspection, by means of frail Men employed under him, He himself was at hand, free of Access, and most willing, and able to redress them. To be absolutely under the Government of such a Prince, and Lord, implies in it the truest Liberty; because it is exactly what reasonable and sociable Creatures ought, to wish for: And Absolute Monarchy, administered by such Power, and Wisdom, is the strongest and most unmoveable Security of the Happiness of those who live under it. But, setting aside this extraordinary Interposition of Almighty God, and speaking of Government as in the Hands of Mortal Men under his ordinary Providence, we must say, that that Form comes the nearest to his Pattern, and his Will, which best answers the Ends of Government; and secures and establishes most effectually the Liberty and Property, the Quiet and Happiness, of the Subject: and that that is at the greatest Distance from Him, which is most of all others likely to introduce those Evils, and Miseries, which it is his Will should be prevented by Government. The Description he gives, by his Prophet, of the Evils consequent upon the Establishment of Absolute Monarchy in the Hands of weak and frail Men, is as contrary to the Government of God, or to the Government of good Angels, under his Inspection,

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specification, as the greatest *Darkness* and *Slavery* is to the truest *Liberty*. And therefore, it is the weakest thing in the World to argue from *Almighty God's Absolute Monarchy*, or from imaginary *Monarchies* amongst the good *Angels*, to the Necessity of the same amongst mortal Men: for tho' they may agree in being *Absolute*, yet they may be as contradictory as *Absolute Light* and *Absolute Darkness*. But certainly, it is no such Weakness to argue that That *Form* of *Government*, whatsoever it be, under which the *Civil and Religious Rights* of *Subjects* are most likely to be effectually preserved, is the *Form*, which bears most Resemblance to the *Example*, and most Conformity to the *Will*, of *God*. Had it pleased *Almighty God* to have pointed out any particular *Form*, as of necessity to be submitted to by all *Nations*; I should certainly think that *this* was the best, and happiest that could be devised, for the carrying forward the *Ends* of *human Society*. But since he hath rather seen fit to leave Mankind in *this*, as in many other *Cases*, to the Dictates of their own Reason, joined to the Pressure of their own Wants, it will be proper for us to consider, in order to judge the better of our own Happiness, the following *Particulars*.

1. That the great *End* of *Government* is the Happiness of the *governed Society*.

2. That

2. That the *Happiness* of a governed Society consists in the Enjoyment of *Liberty*, *Property*, and the *free Exercise* of *Religion*. And,

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3. How far this *Happiness* is attained under our *present Establishment*.

1. I say, The great *End* of *Government* is the *Happiness* of the governed *Society*. Let not any here so mistake me, as to think I mean by this to exclude the *Happiness* of such as undertake, and truly discharge, the laborious and difficult Task of *Governing*: For the *Happiness* of *these* is never so established, and so unmoveably secured, as by the *Happiness* of the *People* whom they govern. But I mean it against such as shew a Willingness to distinguish between the *Happiness* of the *one*, and of the *other*; and who argue, as if they thought *Government* instituted chiefly for the outward *Glory* and *Grandeur* of some particular *Mortals*, with so little *Regard* to all others of the same *Flesh* and *Blood*, as if they had no Part in *Human Society*, and were made for nothing but to gaze, and adore, and serve. Upon this Foundation, we see, *Monarchs* have been induced to engage in *Wars* merely for their own *Glory*; and vainly to attempt to increase the Number of their *Slaves*, as a pleasing *Sacrifice* to their own *Vanity*. Upon this Foundation *Monarchs* have been encouraged to
break

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break through all Laws, *Divine* and *Human*; and to extirpate, or torment their best *Subjects*, for their own imaginary Honour. But the great *Governor* of Heaven and Earth knows no such *End* of their *Institution* as this; and consequently no such *Reason* for the *Submission* of their *Subjects*. The Degrees of *Superiority* established in the World, either by *Nature* or *Custom*, are designed for the good of Families and *Societies*: And if any *Superiority* be supposed to be established immediately by *God* himself, it is still more certain that it is not possible He should have any other *End* in view, but the making *Society* happier than it would be without it. I need not be any longer upon this, because it is seldom denied, unless it be unwarily and consequentially, by Men who are resolved at all Adventures, to defend the *Cause* they have once espoused.

2. I come now, *secondly*, to observe, that the Happiness of a governed *Society* consists in the Enjoyment of *Liberty*, *Property*, and the *free Exercise* of *Religion*. And under this Head there will be little requisite, unless it be to consider what we mean by *Liberty*, and *Property*.

Now when we speak of *Liberty* in a governed *Society*, this we must understand to be something as really different from that *Licentiousness* which

which supposeth no *Government*, as from that *Slavery* which supposeth *Tyranny*; and consequently to be a *State*, between *Servitude* on the one hand, and *Lawlessness* on the other: A Condition, perfectly consistent with the good *Government* of the *Society*; and containing in it all that *Freedom* which is truly, and reasonably to be desired by any Member of it. On the Confines of this State, I say, on the one side stands *Slavery*, which is an absolute *Subjection* to the *Will* of another, not bounded by any wholesome and good *Laws*; which, we are assured by the *Prophet*, is not likely to consist with the Good and Happiness of the governed *Society*. On the other hand stands *Confusion*, or *Licentiousness*, without Law, or *Government*; a *State* in which every Man is his own *Judge*, and his own *Avenger*. Between the two *Extremes* stands that *Liberty*, which alone ought to be valued; a *Freedom*, restrained by beneficial *Laws*, and living and dying together with *Public Happiness*. It is necessary to say this, because many take delight to misrepresent the *Cause* of *Liberty*; and to make the World believe that nothing is aimed at, by the *Advocates* for it, but a *Licentious State* of *Anarchy*, and *Lawless Confusion*: Whereas it is manifest, that *Liberty*, in a governed *Society*, is something as different from *this*, as from the *other*; and that

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that the *Friends of Anarchy* (if there be any such) may as well represent the *Patrons of Liberty*, as the *Patrons of Tyranny and Oppression*, because they are in earnest for the *Restraint of Laws and good Government*. Now, if any one please to say, as some have done, that this is but the *Prétense and Shadow of Liberty*, because every Man in this State cannot do just what He always could wish to do; but is in many Actions restrained and curbed; I answer, that this will equally prove that *Obedience to the Laws of God* is not *Liberty*; which it may certainly with Justice be called, because by *Liberty* we understand something valuable and desirable; and his *Service* is a *Freedom* from such things, as we ought in Reason, and true Love to ourselves, to desire to be free from. So likewise, in the *Case* before us, the *Liberty* we speak of is the *Liberty* of a *Society* rescued from the Inconveniences, and Evils, of *Confusion*, and *Equality*: And the *Liberty* I have described, is a *Freedom* only from such *Evils* as it is our Interest to be free from; not a *Freedom* from such *good Restraints*, as it is reasonable for us to wish and desire *social Creatures* to be under: Which would be a *State of Misery*, not to be desired by any *reasonable Creatures*; and such a State, as, if we were once reduced to it, we should

study


study and labour, as soon as possible, to change. S E R M.
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This Account of true *Liberty*, as it respects *Civil Society*, will lead us to the like Account of *Property*, considered likewise with relation to a well-governed *Society*. This I take to be such a *Possession* of what we call our own, as cannot be shaken by any Humour or Arbitrary Will of *One Man*, or *Party* of Men ; but yet must be subject to the Determination of such *Laws* as are for the common Good and Interest of the whole *Society*. Nor is this *Subjection* any thing but what is desirable in *Society* ; because, though it be possible that a particular Member of it may accidentally suffer by them, yet he might expect to suffer much more without them ; and indeed could have no Hopes of that *secure Possession* of any thing, any longer than he could defend himself by *Force* and *Cunning*. So that *Property*, in a *well-governed Society*, is something as different from *Nominal Possession* under *Absolute Monarchy*, (which, according to *God's* own Description, consists in the being *Tenants* at Will, to one weak, and passionate Man, and in the Enjoyment of nothing any longer than till he comes to imagine it necessary to his private Pleasure, or Glory,) as it is from that *momentary Possession*, which belongs to a *State* in which all are

H equally

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S E R M. equally, without *Law*, or *Government*. It

v. stands between the Two *Extremes*, as secure
 as the *Uncertainties* of this World permit the
 Affairs of Mortals to be, and guarded, at least
 in most Instances against all Attempts of *Mere*
Violence, and *Apparent Fraud*, from whatsoe-
 ver Hands the *Injury* may come. I know this
 Difference is ridiculed by some: and it is said
 that *Subjects* have *Properties* under the most
Absolute Monarchs, as well as under other sort
 of *Governments*. I grant that they may have
Properties secure from the Attacks of other
Subjects, unless such as are protected by the
Monarch: but these *Properties* are only during
 his Pleasure, which is as uncertain as his *Hu-*
mour, or his *Passions*, and are described by
Almighty God himself to be fixed on so pre-
 carious a Bottom, as that the *Subjects* Posses-
 sion of them is entirely at his Mercy.

To *Liberty* and *Property*, I added the free
Exercise of *Religion*, as necessary to the Hap-
 piness of a governed Society; because, as there
 is no *Tyranny* so odious to *God* as *Tyranny* over
 the *Conscience*; so is there no *Slavery* so uneasy
 and ignominious, as a forced *Religion*, or a
Worship imposed upon weak Men by the *Fear*,
 or Application, of outward Inconveniences:
 besides that nothing promotes the flourishing
 Condition of a Nation more than the *Indul-*
gence


gence of this *Freedom* to all whose *Principles* are not manifestly inconsistent with the *Public Safety*. And that this *Freedom*, together with the *Enjoyment* of *Civil Liberty*, and *Property*, as before described, must be an *invaluable Happiness* to a *Nation*, needs no *Proof*; unless it be to Those who are grown weary of their own *Happiness* by *Use*, and have forgotten what *Terror* there was once in the *Fears* of the contrary *Unhappiness*. But this may more plainly appear from what will offer itself upon the *third* Particular, under which I proposed,

3. To consider how far this *Happiness* is attained, and secured, by the present *National Establishment*. Now here it must be acknowledged, that this *World* was never designed for a *State* of *Perfection*: and that there cannot be any *Form* of *Government* contrived and managed by fallible *Men*, which will not be liable to *Inconveniences*. But certainly it may be said, that the *Ends* of *Government* will hardly ever be answered under *Any*, if they be not, under that *Excellent Establishment* we can at present boast of. It is certain, there might be *Liberty* and *Property* under *Absolute Monarchs*; were they all, as good *Angels*, or as *God* himself. But we know, from his *Prophet*, that it is not likely there should be *Ei-*

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ther,

100 *The Happiness of the present Establishment,*


SERM. *ther*, where *They* are once established. On the
 v. contrary, by the peculiar Mercy of God, our
 ~~~~~ *Constitution* is so framed, that we enjoy all the  
*Liberty* that is consistent with good Govern-  
*ment*; without lying at the Mercy of any one  
 Person. By the same good *Providence*, we can  
 much more justly call our Possessions, and our  
 Labours, *our own*, than *They* can, who are lia-  
 ble to the Invasion of an *Absolute Monarch*,  
 whensoever he pleaseth. Again, It is possible  
 that we might have a *Freedon of Religion*, un-  
 der a *Popish Government*, and a *Popish Direc-*  
*tion*; but I hope I may say, It is for ever cer-  
 tain to us all, under an Administration entirely  
*Protestant*. Some indeed seem to think our  
*Liberties* most safe, our *Properties* most secure,  
 nay, our very *Religion* best guarded, under  
*Arbitrary Power*, and *Popish Faith*. But it  
 is wonderful to *Others*, how they can unite to-  
 gether such disjointed, such irreconcilable  
 Things. And it is to be hoped that *Common*  
*Sense* is not so wholly lost amongst us, as that  
 any such Fallacies can be put upon our Un-  
 derstandings, as may make us undervalue our  
 unparalleled Happiness. These Blessings are  
 made more diffusive, and lasting, by an *Union*  
 of two *Kingdoms*, whose *Separate Interests* used  
 to portend *Public Calamity*: And all rendered  
 yet more secure to ourselves, and our latest *Pos-*  
*terity*,

terity, by Eſtabliſhing the *Succession* in the *Pro- S E R M.*  
*testant Line*; without which it is too probable v.  
 that all that we have been hitherto labouring,   
 at great Expence of Money and Blood, would  
 be of no Importance to ſucceeding Generations.  
 So that this great *Iſland* is *One Kingdom*, go-  
 verned after the moſt deſirable manner, and  
 the leaſt liable to great Evils. True *Liberty*  
 flouriſhes; *Property* is ſecurely poſſeſſed; and  
 all enjoy the Freedom of Worſhiping God as  
 their *Conſciences* direct: and a Proſpect of a  
*long Enjoyment* of all theſe Happineſſes is af-  
 forded us by the diſtant View of *ſucceeding*  
*Princes*, Who, we may hope, will learn from  
 the *preſent Example* to account it their chief  
 Glory to preſerve theſe Bleſſings; and their  
 own greateſt Happineſs, to make their People  
 happy. And need I tell, to what it is that  
 we owe theſe ſingular and invaluable Happi-  
 neſſes? Is it not too plain to need any Proof,  
 that we owe them all entirely to the late *Re-*  
*volution*, founded upon the Principles of *Li-*  
*ber ty*? Without *This*, *Absolute Power* had been  
 by this Time firmly ſettled, and ſecured by  
 Force of *Arms*; and that *Popiſh Pretender*,  
 whom we all now profeſs to deteſt, and ab-  
 jure, been the *Eſtabliſhed Monarch* of this  
*Kingdom*. Without *This*, it had been imposſi-  
 ble for us to have known the Bleſſings of the

SERM. *present Reign*, or to have hoped for any succeeding ones under the *Protestant Line*. In one word, Without *This*, our *Liberties*, and *Properties*, had long ago been nothing but *Words*; and our *Religion* nothing but *Passive Obedience*. Could one think it possible for Any to be insensible of our present *Happy Estate*; or of the *Unhappiness* of the contrary? . Yet, the *Notions* of some amongst us are too plain to be covered, and of too great Importance to be overlooked, which leads me to what I proposed in the next Place, *viz.*

*Secondly*, To make farther Application of the *History*, which I have just now been considering, to Ourselves, by some *Observations* arising from the apparent Uneasinesses of some amongst us. For, as the *Jews* were ungrateful to the *God* who ruled them; and so insensible of the happy *Government* they were under, as to desire a Change from *Liberty* and *Property*, to *Slavery* and *Vassalage*: As under every little Trial of their *Faith* they repented, and regretted that *Glorious Revolution* which freed them from *Egyptian Slavery*, reviling their great *Deliverer*, *Moses*, and wearying out his *Successors* with their perpetual Discontents, till they brought themselves to a State of *Servitude* again: So we find amongst ourselves but too much Ingratitude, too much Insensibility, too much Desire of *Future Slavery*, and too little



little an Aversion to a Change of the Happiest SERM.  
*Establishment* this Island ever yet enjoyed, into V.  
 the most unhappy. And that this Complaint   
 may not seem a groundless Imagination, I must  
 observe,

1. That such *Schemes* of Government are publicly and daily proposed, and maintained, amongst us, as are *absolutely* inconsistent with the Security of the *present Establishment*, and these bound upon the Consciences of Men by the pretended Will of God, and the Terrors of his Displeasure; and these applauded and recommended by many, who, it is to be charitably hoped, are not sensible of their Consequences. The *Right* of *Primogeniture* in the *Male Line* is set up above any other *Right*, and above the Happiness of Thousands of *People* united. This is declared to be the *Voice* of *God*; tho' where it is to be found, I know not, unless it be in the secret Whispers of a Dream. But what then must become of the Title of our present Gracious *Queen*, to whose Support all Her good Subjects are now offering their *Lives* and *Fortunes*? She is in *Possession* indeed; but, according to this *Scheme*, there is always a *better Claimer* than Herself. For, Can a *Woman* be a *Male Heir*? Or, May not any *Pretender*, whether *Legitimate*, or not; May not any neighbouring *Patron* of *Pretenders*, nay, any mad *First-born* of her own *Subjects*,





upon this absurd Scheme, be a *better Claimer* than Himself? For it is *possible* that any such *Man* that can be named may be the *Eldest Son* of the *Right Branch* even from *Noah* himself; but absolutely *impossible* that a *Woman* should. Behold at once that *Sex* for ever cut off from all possible Claim, to which this *Nation* must own itself extremely indebted, both for *Glory* Abroad, and *Wise Administration* at Home! Behold at one Stroke the *Protestant Line* defeated, and set aside; and the *Popish Branches* recalled, by the modest Pleadings of some, who, you are desired to believe, with extremely well to their *Country*. But, lest this should be too gross to be easily swallowed, 2. We are frequently entertained with the great Praises of an *Absolute Monarchy*, as the only *Legitimate*, and *Jure Divino* Government; the only Form agreeable to the *Will* of God; and assured, over and over again, that all other *Forms* are no better than *Bastard Governments*. Behold again, our whole Constitution absolutely at one Blast overthrown! For if so, what have we to do, but, under Pain of God's Displeasure, to dissolve all Appearances of *Parliaments*, as only *Encumbrances*, and *Checks* upon *Absolute Power*? But, lest the *People* should not embrace this with an *Implicit Faith*, the *Patrons* of this *Doctrine* condescend to argue from  
public

public Good, and even to appeal to their Judgment, so much ridiculed and exposed by them on other Occasions. We are told therefore, that *Absolute Monarchy* is the only Government for our Good, nay, the strongest Security to our *Liberties* and *Properties*, against the Judgment even of God himself. But who will not easily believe so plain a Point as this, that *We* of this *Kingdom* are greater *Slaves* than the *Subjects* of *France*? And that it is our greatest Interest to receive with open Arms the mild and gentle Government, under which They are so free, and happy? Thus do some amongst us, like the *Jews*, solicit Heaven for an *Absolute Monarchy*. But neither will this so easily be swallowed; and therefore, 3. It is publicly taught, and inculcated with great Earnestness, and Repetition, that it had been better for this Nation never to have departed from *Absolute Passive Obedience*; and that *Non-resistance* in all Cases is for the Interest of Ourselves and Posterity after us: Though it be to *Resistance* justly called for, and prudently managed, that we owe our present *Queen*, and the Hopes of a good *Succession*; our free *Parliaments*, our *Liberties*, our *Properties*, and the secure Profession of our *Religion*. I desire therefore to know, What this is, but to tell us plainly, that it had been for our Interest to have

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SERM. have permitted a *late King* to have overturned  
 v. our whole *Constitution*, and have imposed upon  
 ~~~~~ us a *pretended Son*; to have wanted the *Blessings* of the present Reign, and the Hopes of any future Security; and to have been, even to this Day, under the Sway of that *Pretender*, who hath now alarmed us? And what is this but to tell us, at this seasonable Juncture, that it is for our Interest to recal, and submit to, Him, returning with penitent Hearts to that happy *State*, in which we should have been, had *Non-resistance* been entirely practised. Others, who will not go so far as this, yet join in blackening that *Resistance*, and that *Revolution*, on which our present *Establishment* is founded. Nay, If they detest the *Invasion* threatened by a *pretended Prince*, they think they cannot sufficiently do it, unless at the same Time they detest that *Resistance*, without which the *Invader* had now actually been upon the Throne; and boast of their constant Adherence to such *Doctrines* as condemn the late Glorious *Revolution*, and naturally tend to shake the hearty Affection of Men towards an *Establishment*, founded, according to them, upon what was perfectly displeasing to *Almighty God*. It is with Reluctance that I speak after this manner: But why should such Persons take it amiss, if others equally detest those *Doctrines*,  
 the

the Practice of which would unavoidably have excluded our *Excellent Queen*, and the whole *Protestant Line*; and established that very *Pretender* upon the Throne, whose Attempt is now detested? Doth not our *Queen* herself place her *Security* in the Cause of *Liberty* which She maintains? And doth not She profess, that her chief Dependence must be upon those who have, upon all Occasions, expressed their Zeal for the Support of the late *Revolution*? And shall we tell Her that *She* is not safe, if the *Revolution*, which saved her, can be defended: or that *Subjects* are not *Dutiful*, if they be not *Slaves*? Whereas the present *Establishment* cannot be *secure*, unless the *Revolution* be a good *Foundation*; and the *Duty* of *Subjects* is something vastly different from the *Vassalage* of *Slaves*; and their *Liberty* at once the Ornament and Support of the *British Crown*. Pardon me, if *Respect* for so good a *Queen*, and Concern for so excellent an *Establishment*, and *Regard* for the Happiness of Ourselves and *Posterity*, have led me to express some Zeal against *Principles* and *Doctrines* which have of late been as warmly espoused, as if the *Revolution* had in its Consequences proved the greatest Misfortune to the *Nation*; and it were now high Time to get rid of all the *Effects* of it yet remaining, by submitting to the

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SERM. the Pretensions of a Nominal Prince, supported
v. by a Monarch, who seems not much to delight in any other Obedience of Subjects but what is Passive, and what groans under the Burthen either of his Glory, or his Cruelty.

I have now laid before you some Observations, respecting as well the *present Happiness* we enjoy, as the unhappy *Notions* of some amongst us. Almighty God thought it a good Argument against *Absolute Monarchy*, to shew the *Israelites* the Unhappiness and Servitude of Subjects, introduced by that *Form of Government*. In Imitation of so unexceptionable a Pattern, we can do no less than protest solemnly to Persons like-minded, and shew them the Manner of the King they would have to reign over them; and the Manner of the Kingdom they would gladly see established amongst us. And this I thought peculiarly agreeable to this Time, when the Nation hath been alarmed by the Pretences of One, whose Success must have been accompanied with *Absolute Power*, and the Ruine of our present happy *Establishment*; but whose Attempt hath by this Time, we hope, sufficiently convinced Him of its own Weakness. Our happy Estate therefore, I have set before your Eyes, that you may the better judge of the Unhappinesses of the contrary: which I have likewise shewn as I passed.

But,

But, without these Assistances, you may easily imagine to your selves the blessed Effects of *French Instructions*, and *French Force*, and a *Popish Faith*, should any *Future Attempt* prove more successful to this *Pretender*; and judge from former *Precedents*, how exactly he will answer all his *Obligations*; how sincerely he will promise to maintain the *Church of England*, as by *Law established*, meaning the *Popish Church* established in former *Days*; how inviolably he will preserve your *Laws*, by dispensing with them; how strenuously he will maintain your *Properties*, by esteeming and using them as his own; how glorious he will make the *Union*, by enlarging it to the *Gallican Church*, and *State*, and how indulgent he will be to tender Consciences, by allowing them the *Liberty* of choosing exquisite *Torments*, or the Profession of his own *Religion*. Let Men consider whether this be not the very *State* they are to expect under *Him*; and then, voluntarily choose it if they can.

This is a *Subject* of great, and universal Importance: And, if it be needful to add any *Apology*, let it be remembered, that it is foreign to no Man's Office, upon all just Occasions, to inculcate such *Doctrines* as promote the Happiness of *human Society*; and particularly not Foreign to *ours*, to consider a *Subject* to which

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IIO *Happiness of the present Establishment, &c.*

SERM. *Almighty God, by his Prophet, so plainly leads*
v. *our Thoughts. But, to conclude, Whatever*
~ *Influence the Considerations, I have urged, may*
have upon some Minds, I hope they may at
least animate such as are well-disposed already
to follow the noble Example of our First Bri-
tish Parliament, in their Approbation of the
late Revolution; their Zeal for Her present
Majesty; their Concern to support the just Ti-
tle of Herself, and Her Protestant Successors;
And their Resolution to do all in their Power
to maintain the Happinesses we enjoy, and to
convey them down unviolated to our Posterity
after us.

S E R M O N VI.

Preached at the Affizes at *Hertford*, July 26,
1708.

A C T S xxii. 25.

And as they bound him with Thongs, Paul said unto the Centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a Man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

IT being my Design to speak something at this Time concerning the Nature of *Laws*, and the great Advantage of them to the Well-being of *Human Society*, I think it not improper to found what I have to say upon the Behaviour of *St. Paul*, as it is recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, with respect to his *Civil Privileges*, and to his *Civil Superiors*, and *Judges*. And I choose to do so, because this will at once give us some Light into the true Interpretation of the *Doctrine* delivered by *himself* and *others* in the *New Testament*, concerning *Government*; and lead us into some useful *Observations*

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SERM. *servations relating to the Happiness of Human*
VI. *Society.*



I. I propose to give you a brief View of the Behaviour of St. Paul, as it is recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, with respect to those *Civil Rights*, and *Privileges*, to which the *Laws* of the *Roman*, or *Jewish*, *State* entitled Him; and to those *Civil Magistrates*, and *Judges*, before whom he had occasion to appear. And,

1. In the *Chapter* now before us, the *chief Captain*, who appears to have acted the Part of a *Civil Magistrate*, as well as of a *Commanding Officer* in *Jerusalem*, resolving to find out what it was that had so much incensed the whole Multitude against St. Paul, commanded him to be scourged, in order to his own Confession of his Crime. St. Paul could have bor'n this Usage with as great *Christian Patience*, and *Roman Fortitude*, as any Man living: And no Man knew the true Glory of suffering wrongfully better than He. But, instead of this, He seems to think it a much more becoming Part to insist upon those *Civil Privileges* which the *Laws* of the *State* entitled him to, as He was free of the City of Rome. *Is it lawful for you to scourge a Man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?* was the Question which he thought fit at that Time to ask.

If

If a certain Sett of *Notions* had been embraced in those *Days*, some of his *Fellow-Christians* might perhaps have informed Him, that the *Laws were but a dead Letter*; that what the *Executive Power* ordained was *Law*, though contrary to all the *Laws* then in force; that He who was but a *Subject*, was no proper Judge of his own *Rights*, and ought not to give so ill a Precedent to other *Subjects*, as might encourage them to dare to judge when their *Privileges* were invaded; and much more, that He, being a *Christian*, and an *Apostle*, a Follower of a crucified Master, and a Preacher of the Doctrine of the *Cross*, ought not to shew any Concern about worldly *Rights* and *Privileges*; but think it a Glory rather to give them up to the Invasion of his *Superiors*. Thus, I say, might some *Christians* have taught St. *Paul* to have behaved himself. But He, we find, was of another Opinion; and had very different Sentiments concerning these Matters. He thought it no Argument of a *Christian Spirit*, to suffer any thing which he could honourably avoid; and He thought it honourable to plead the Privilege of a *Subject* against the Encroachments of the *Higher Powers*: And so He appeals to the *Laws*, and claims the *Right* of being used by the *Executive Power*, no otherwise than as they direct.

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2. If we follow him a little farther, we shall find *Him*, in the next *Chapter*, brought, by Order of the same *Chief Captain*, before the *Chief Priests*, and *Councils* of the *Jews*, to see how he could acquit himself to Them. Upon his declaring his Sincerity, and Uprightness, the High-priest *Ananias* commanded them that stood by, to smite Him on the Mouth. St. Paul's Reply was very severe, *God shall smite thee, thou whited Wall: For sittest thou there to judge me after the Law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the Law?* ver. 3. And tho' He afterwards repented of the reproachful Word he gave the *High-priest* in his Anger; yet he repented not of the just Sense he had, of the illegal Indignity offered him; or of his Zeal against all such *Magistrates* as acted against the *End* of their *Office*, and against those *Laws* by which they ought to be governed in the *Execution* of it. Here again it is evident, that this great *Apostle* had the *Spirit* of *Liberty* in him; and thought that those *Laws* which were made for the Security and Guard of it, were not to be dispensed with, at the Pleasure of those whose Business it was to execute them. Here again we find him pretending to know, and judge of, his own *Civil Privileges*; and not tamely submitting to the Violation of them. If some *Christians* of later

Ages



Ages had lived in his Time, and been Witnesses of this, they would not only have said, *Revilest thou God's High-priest?* but would have asked him, how He, being a *Subject*, and a *Christian*, could answer to his own Conscience, his thinking any *Subjects* fit *Judges* of the Invasion of their own *Privileges*? They would have reprehended him severely for placing himself above his *Judges*, and turning the World upside down; for making *Subjects* *Rulers*, and *Rulers* *Subjects*, as they love to speak, by this preposterous Way of pleading his *Privileges*, even whilst he stood before a *Court of Judicature*. But it is very plain, that, as no Man was more zealous for the Honour and Veneration of such *Magistrates* as answer the *Ends* of their *Office*, which is the *Good* of *Human Society*; so no Man could express a more hearty Dislike of those who acted a contrary Part; or a greater Concern for the Temporal good Estate of *Subjects*, even amidst his continual Labours and *Cares* for the Eternal Happiness of all Men. Once more,

3. If we look back as far as the 16th *Chap.* we shall find a yet greater Proof of this. The *Magistrates* of *Philippi* commanded *Paul* and *Silas* to be beaten *with many Stripes*, and cast into *Prison*, ver. 23, but the next Morning sent to the *Keeper* of the *Prison* to let them go,

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ver. 35. *St. Paul's Answer is very observable, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into Prison: And now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves, and fetch us out. He was just now delivered out of Prison by a wonderful Shock of the Earth about it; and so might have escaped before this Release was brought from the Magistrates: But after such a good-natured Message from them, one would think, He might have quietly departed. It would have been but the Compliance of a Subject with a lawful Request of his Superiors. Yet this great Apostle did not think it honourable to go away, without expressing some resentment against the Invasion of the Privileges of the Subject, which the Magistrates had been guilty of; and without pleading the Cause of injured Inferiors. He continues resolute till these Magistrates themselves had waited upon him, and desired him to depart out of the City,* ver. 39. And here again, How would some, who pretend to found their Notions of these Matters upon this very *Apostle*, have reprehended any other Man in the same Circumstances? Answerest thou the *Vicegerents* of God so? Where is the profound Respect due to that *Order* instituted by God himself? Where is the Sense of the Duty of *Subjects*? Nay, where

is Government itself, if Subjects may be allowed to judge of the Invasion of their own *Privileges*: if *Laws* must be placed above the Determinations of the *Executive Power*? But above all, where can there be a Stop, when Obedience is refused to a lawful Injunction of the *Magistrate*, and to what might without Sin be complied with? Whom therefore shall we follow? Those who speak after this manner, or *St. Paul*, who knew, as well as they, the Duty owing to *Magistrates*; and yet gave not up his own Judgment to them? But tho' a *Subject*, and acting the Part of a *Subject*, took upon him (by what these Persons might perhaps call a stubborn Behaviour) to bring the *Magistrates* themselves to a Sense of that Invasion they had made upon the *Rights* and *Privileges* of *Roman Subjects*; and this, tho' the *Invasion* appears to have been made merely through an hasty Mistake. Of so great Consequence did He think it to oppose one single Instance of *illegal Oppression*!

Thus I have given you a true Account of the most remarkable *Passages* recorded concerning *St. Paul's* Behaviour, with Respect to his *Civil Privileges*; and to those *Magistrates*, before whom he had occasion to appear. If any one say, that all this relates only to *Deputed*, or *Inferior Magistrates*, not to the Su-

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preme : I answer that it cannot relate to *one* without relating to the *other*, because *Government* cannot be managed in the World but by *Deputed* and *Inferior Officers* ; because the *Christian Religion* (as *St. Peter* testifieth) commands the Obedience required in it, with Respect to both ; because otherwise, the Argument urged by some for the *Magistrate's* uncontrollable *Authority*, drawn from our *Lord's* acknowledging the *Power of Pilate* to be from Above, who was but a *Deputed Governor*, must fall to the Ground ; because both *Supreme* and *Inferior* are said, by many, to act as *one Authority*, by the same *Divine Commission* ; and so are equally bor'n out by it against all Opposition, or at least equally elevated above all Pretences of *Subjects* to judge concerning their *Conduct* : And because it is as impossible, according to the Reasoning of some Men, to oppose in any Instance the *lowest Officer* in Authority, without opposing the *Supreme* ; as it is said to be, to oppose the *Supreme*, without opposing *God* himself, whose *Vice-gerent* he is : I proceed, in the *second Place*,

II. To consider if this *Account* of *St. Paul's Behaviour* will not give us Light into the true Interpretation of the *Doctrine* delivered by *Himself*, and *others*, in the *New Testament*, concerning

concerning *Government*; and lead us to some S E R M.
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cieties, and to *that* in particular to which we
 belong. For can any one think that these
Passages were recorded for nothing, but to
 serve for an *Embellishment* of *St. Paul's* Story?
 Or can any one think, that *St. Paul* had a re-
 gard to his own particular worldly Interest in
 these Parts of his Conduct? *He*, that had suf-
 fered, and knew he was to suffer, much great-
 er Hardships? *He*, that was ready to give up
 his Life for the sake of *Christianity*, and to
 follow his Master through all Indignities, and
 all Persecutions, when the Glory of *God* should
 call him to it? No, it was something more
 than his own Part in this World which en-
 gaged him to shew himself after this manner;
 for *this* he could with the greatest Ease have
 neglected. But the Happiness of *Human So-*
cieties, and the good Estate of the *Inferior Part*
 of Mankind, moved his Soul to a generous
 Indignation against every thing in *Government*
 which favoured of *Tyranny*; and kindled in
 his Breast a Zeal for every Thing which it
 was fit for *Subjects* to enjoy. Let us therefore
 see, if his *Behaviour* will not lead us to some
 useful, and important Thoughts, relating to
Christians incorporated in *Civil Societies*.

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I. I need not take particular Notice that St. Paul thought it not beneath a *Christian*, and an *Apostle*, to concern himself with his *Rights* and *Privileges*, as He was a *Subject* of the *Roman State*. He knew, as well as any since his Time, that he belonged to a City above, whose Builder is *God*; He knew that his chief Concern was *Eternity* and *Heaven*; He knew that no *Tyrannical Magistrate* could rob him of his Innocence, or of his Salvation: And yet he considered himself likewise as a Member of *Human Society*, and acted the Part of one who had a just Sense of the *Privileges* of his *Citizenship* here on Earth, as well as of that *Citizenship* in *Heaven*, which he speaks of to the *Philippians*, and *Ephesians*. And why should it be thought unworthy of any other *Preachers* of the *Gospel*, to imitate so great an Example, in the same great Concern for the Good of *Human Society*? To proceed,

2. Let St. Paul himself answer all those who have on his Authority pretended to exalt the *Executive Power* above all *Laws*; and above the very *Ends* of that *Office* for which they were instituted. He, it is plain, knew nothing of this: Nor did he carry the Obligation of a *quiet Submission* to any such Instances as were contrary to the *Design* of that *Office*.

Let

Let them learn from himself, that, when he speaks highly of *Magistrates*, it is of such as are *Gods* indeed in *Human Society*; such as maintain the Character and Dignity of their Station, by answering the Ends of it; and that when they descend to invade the *Privileges* they were ordained to guard, He knew no such profound Respect to be due to them. Let them learn from *Him*, that the *Laws* of the *Roman State* were above the *Executive Power*; and that mere Authority of the *Magistrate* could not make That to be *Law*, which was against the *written Laws*; or oblige Him to comply with what was injurious to his *Civil Privileges*; and consequently, that he understood not his Master's Doctrine concerning the Governors of this World, to be destructive of the *Privileges* and Happiness of the *governed Society*; and that he himself, in his own *Doctrine*, delivered in other Places, meant nothing contrary to these. Let them learn from his *Practice*, which is certainly the *best Interpreter* of his own *Doctrine*, and that of his *Master* and *Fellow-Apostles*, that when He saith, *there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be are ordained of God*; and that when his great Master acknowledges the Power of *Pilate* to be from Above, no more could be meant, than that it was agreeable to *God's Will* that some Persons

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Persons should be invested with *Power* for the good of *Human Society*; but not that *God* had made them uncontrollable in acting against his *Commission*, and to the Ruine of their *Fellow-Creatures*. And let them remember, that when *St. Paul* commanded *Respect*, and forbade *Opposition* to the *Higher Powers*; and that when *St. Peter* commanded the same *Subjection* both to the *Supreme* and *Deputed Magistrates*; They were considered as acting the best Part in the World; and nothing intended by this to oblige *Subjects* to a *Quiet Submission* to such illegal and unjust *Conduct*, as affects and shakes the *Universal Happiness*. And,

3. If they still repeat the old *Question*, Who shall judge of the *Invasion* of *Privileges*? let the same *St. Paul* answer them, who, in the Capacity of a *Subject*, more than once is recorded (in the short *History* we have of his Actions) to have presumed to judge concerning his own *Privileges*, against the *Invasion* of the *Magistrate*; and to have done this, as by a *Right* belonging to every Member of the same *Society*. His *Christianity* did not make him forget that he was a *Roman*: And as a *Roman*, he judged that he had the *Privileges* of a *Roman*: And that his *Christianity* did not oblige him to give up these to any Mortal, as long as He could with Honour keep them. The Possibi-

Possibility of his mistaking in this, in which he acted not as an *Apostle*, was no Argument to him against this Right: Nor did the Weakness of other Men's Judgments prevail with him not to set them an Example of *judging* in the like Circumstances. What Confusion, what Disorder, say some, must ensue, if *Subjects* be allowed to judge concerning the Invasion of their own *Rights* and *Privileges*? But let them believe St. *Paul* for once, that much more Misery must ensue upon *Human Society*, if it be a settled Point that the *Executive Powers* may absolutely, and without Controll, determine what they please concerning the *inferior* Part of the World. If any one ask where he saith this, I answer, his Behaviour speaks it aloud: for he never would have acted the Part which He did, could he have thought it more for *public Good*, that *Subjects* should give up all their Judgments to the Determination of their *Magistrates*, than that they should judge concerning the Violation of their common *Rights* after the best manner they could. Let not Men therefore forget *Modesty* so much as to laugh out of Countenance this Right of judging in *Subjects*, which St. *Paul* himself claimed merely as he was a *Subject*.

4. Let those learn it from St. *Paul*, who will not bear it from others, that *Rights* and *Privileges*,

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leges, Liberty, and Property, and the like, are not Words fitted only to raise the Spirits of the People, and to foment Disturbances in Society; but that they are Things worth contending for. Some may think (unless Respect to an Apostle a little divert them from it) what great Matter if St. Paul had bor'n a little Scourging? Or why could not he pass over the Injuries offered him by his Governors? To which I know no better Answer than this, that his Behaviour was what it was, merely because they were Magistrates; i. e. because it was a Case not of Concern to Himself only, but to Human Society. For he could bear, and pass by, Injuries as well as any Man: and had they been private Persons who had offered him any as great Indignities, I doubt not, He would have bor'n them without any Return but that of Forgiveness. But when the Civil Privileges of that Society to which he belonged, were invaded by those, whose Duty and Profession it was to maintain them, He thought it a just Occasion to shew his Sense of so great an Evil; tho' it immediately touched only himself. The Consideration of the Character and Office of Those who offered the Injuries, was so far from determining him to pass them over with Silence; (according to some Mens Way of arguing) that it was the very thing that made him look

upon them not as private Injuries ; but with a Resentment due to Injuries of a *public* and *universal* Concern. And however some may ridicule the *Liberties* of *Subjects* ; St. Paul*, it is plain, was for standing *fast*, not only in the *Liberty* with which Christ had made him free from the *Jewish Law* of *Ceremonies* ; but also in that *Liberty* with which the *Laws of Nature*, and of the *Roman State*, had made him free from Oppression and Tyranny. For,

5. It is another Observation which we may make from his *Example*, that He thought the *End* of written *Laws* to be the *Security* of the *Subject* against any Arbitrary Proceedings of the *Executive Power* ; and that this could not be, unless the *Executive* were governed by these *Laws*, as well as the *Subject*. If this had not been his Opinion ; it had been frivolous for him to have urged his *Privileges* founded upon the *Laws* : by urging of which he plainly implies, that they were the Measure of the *Magistrate's* Behaviour toward the *Subject*. And I hope, it is the same in all the like *Establishments*. But how contrary is this to the *Maxims* of Some, who make the *Laws* insignificant Trifles ; and place the *Will* of the *Executive Power* above them, declaring that otherwise there can be no such thing as *Government* ?

* Gal. v. 1.

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By which Word they generally seem to understand something beyond such a *Government* as is for the good of the *governed Society*. How contrary is this to Such as make *written Laws* only an Encroachment upon the *Absolute Power* instituted by *God*; and study to make their *Power* as contemptible as they can, that the Necessity of *Absolute Monarchy* may the better appear; and boast of their Services this way, as if they were of the greatest Importance? If these Notions be embraced, what must be thought of St. *Paul* under the *Roman State*, who thought it his Happiness to have *Rights* and *Privileges* settled by written *Laws*? What must we think of the wisest *Nations* in former Times, who could devise no greater Security, against *Oppression* and Unhappiness in *Societies*, than *Laws*? And if we come home to our selves, What must we think of the envied *Constitution* under which we live; and, by the Virtue and Power of *Laws*, all enjoy the chief Happinesses that Human Life can wish for? What must we think of that *Revolution* in which *High* and *Low* so unanimously joined, chiefly to rescue our *Laws* from a *Dispensing Power*; and to divest the *Executive* from all Pretenses to a Superiority over the *Legislative*? And what must we think of those *Magistrates*, whom the present Age beholds with Veneration, and Ages to come will remember

member with Eternal Honour ; who, tho' commissioned by the *Supreme Executive Power*, yet acknowledge no Rule of their Conduct but what is prescribed to them by the *Legislative*; and account it their chief Glory, to be the Guardians of the *Laws*, as *They* are of the *Liberties* of the *People*?

The judicious Mr. *Hooker* * thinks that *Human Societies* first made a Trial of Government by the Will of one Man ; (as their first *Essay* might well be the worst and most imperfect;) and that They were constrained to come to *Laws* as a Remedy against the *Evils* of that kind of *Regimen*, after they had found (as his *Expression* is) *That to live by one Man's Will was the Cause of all Men's Misery*. This agrees with *St. Paul*, who plainly thought that *Laws* were designed as a Curb to the *Arbitrary Will* of the *Executive Power*. But invain did He contend in his Days ; invain have the wisest of Men discoursed in all Ages ; and invain is *Absolute Power* controlled by Success of Arms in our own Times ; if we can live to be persuaded, either that there is no Difference in Governments ; or that there is no Guard in *Laws* against *Arbitrary Power* ; nor any Force in them but what must bend to the Will of

* *Eccles. Polity*, Book I. § 10.

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those whose *Office* it is to execute and defend them. A lasting *Liberty* is founded upon *Laws*; and is the result of a good *Constitution* of *Government*, as *Health* is of a right *Constitution* of *Body*. In this also like *Health*; that it is valued most by Those who have known the Taste of it, under the first Apprehension, or Sense, of the want of it; but little prized by thoughtless Men, under a secure and unshaken Enjoyment: whilst *Slavery*, like *Sickness*, to Those who never tasted it, seems nothing; and to Those who have been oppressed long enough to forget what *Liberty* is, becomes the more tolerable, as a Bodily *Indisposition* doth to such as know not, or despair of, a better State. But is it not very unaccountable, that *Blessings* should be undervalued by weak Men, for that Security which should recommend them; nay, that *Curses* should be invited down from *Heaven* in the room of them? That, when the Inconveniences of *Absolute Monarchy* made Men first fly to *Laws* for Refuge, they should ever fly back again from what they must acknowledge their Happiness; and call for that *Absolute Power* to dispense with these *Laws*, which these *Laws* were purposely designed, and instituted, to controll and confine. But thus it is even at this Day, after the Experience of so many Ages; even amongst our selves, after so grate-
ful

ful and pleasing a Taste of the Blessings of a *Legal Constitution*; even under the most uncorrupt, unblameable Administration of *Justice* and *Equity*, that ever any Nation was blessed with. But, to return,

6. *St Paul's* Behaviour should, methinks, upon second Consideration, make some Persons a little more cautious of affirming *Absolute Monarchy*, invested with a Power above all the Encroachments of written *Laws*, to be the only Form agreeable to the *Will of God*; nay, if you can hear it without smiling, the most beneficial to the *Subject*. For let any one tell me, whether upon this Principle it had not been the *Duty* of *St. Paul* to have taken the Opportunity offered him of owning the superior Power of the *Magistrate*; of acknowledging the little use of *Laws* to *Human Society*; and of shewing the *Christian Religion* to be a great Friend, tho' not to the *lawless Confusion* of the Multitude, yet to the *lawless Power* of the *Magistrate*. This had been a noble Piece of Service, not only to *Truth*, but to *Human Society*; according to some: And I presume *St. Paul* knew the *Will*, and the plain *Revelation*, of *God*, as well at least as any *Modern Christian*; and would gladly have suffered a few *Stripes*, in order to bear Testimony to so important a Part of *God's Law*. Nor need He

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have doubted this way to have turned the Anger of the *Magistrates* into Favour, and a kind Regard both to himself, and his Profession. But He appears to have been a Stranger to all this : And his Zeal for the *Laws* shews that He thought both the Will of God, and the Good of Society, to require another *Scheme* than that of an *Unlimited Executive Power*.

Thus have I laid before you a true Account of the *Behaviour* and *Notions* of that *Apostle*, in favour of the *Rights* of *Subjects*, who hath been long, and often, represented by many, as the greatest Asserter of an *unlimited Authority* in the *Executive Power*. And tho' I have been treating of *Civil* and *Secular* Concerns, yet, I hope, I may be safe under the Patronage of *St. Paul's* Example, and of those *Scriptures* which give us this Account of his *Conduct* and *Behaviour*, as of something not unuseful to *Men* and *Christians*. Nor is it a small Satisfaction to speak upon this *Subject* before those who understand the *Value* and *Importance* of *wholesome Laws* ; and know how to scorn all the Homage or Respect of Men, but what results from an unbiaſſed, and uninterrupted, Administration of *Justice*.

And now, if *St. Paul* shewed so great a Respect to the written *Laws* of that *State* under which He lived ; if *He* thought it worth

his while (whose grand Affair was to propagate a *New Religion*, and the Belief of a *Future State*) to concern himself so much with this World, as to insist upon his *Rights* and *Privileges*, as He was a *Subject*, and to shew no ordinary Regard to them; if *He* thought it the Happiness of a Kingdom to have such *Privileges* as are fit for *Subjects*, settled by *Law*, and an Happiness not to be shaken at the *Will* of the *Executive Power*; if *He* thought that *Subjects* might judge concerning the Invasion of their *Privileges*, and were not brought into Being to submit to every thing imposed upon them: Let us learn from so great an Example, to value our own Happiness in that *Legal Establishment* under which we live, and live so as to enjoy Life. *His* Example bids us plainly stand fast in our *Liberty* supported by *Laws*. Let this move us more than the fallacious Disputations of Those who are continually declaiming against this Happiness, and endeavouring to persuade us to change it for another sort of *Government*; arguing the *Benefit* of this to ourselves, and the *Right* of it in others. And, lest we should not be moved to a Change, the Argument is sometimes turned; and we are to be informed that our whole Notion of *Liberty* is a mistaken *Chimera*, and *Nonsense*: That whereas we think that we have



Laws to govern us, it is only the *Will* of the *Executive* which rules; that, whereas we think these *Laws* are made by the Consent and *Authority* of the *Representatives* of the *People*, it is no such thing; that it is the *Prince* only who *Enacts*; that no others have any share in the *Legislature*; that it hath *all the Treason possible in it*, to say that the *Parliament* hath a *co-ordinate Power* in *Legislation*; that our *Constitution* abhors *co-ordinate Legislative Powers*; that our *Constitution* is one *Sovereign*, whose *Supremacy* is indivisible, and both the *Legislative* and *Executive* are in it, notwithstanding that all our *Laws* are said to be *enacted* not only by the *Prince*, but by the *Authority* of the *Lords* and *Commons*, in the same Sentence; and consequently, that the *Executive*, being the only *Legislative*, can dispense, annul, destroy *Laws* as it pleaseth; that the *People*, without Distinction, are the *Sons of Belial*, a Company of *Vassals*, that live and subsist by the *Concession* of their *Master* only, and the like. Positions which I would not mention, but that they are exposed to Light, and propagated with Heat, every Day: Tho' I hope not with such Force, as to disengage our Affections from an Happiness, without which, I know not whether it had not been as well for us to have been born to a Wilderness and a Den.

As *Laws* therefore, have turned the *Desert* of this *World* into a *Paradise*, and the *Wildness* of *Mankind* into *Human Society*; so, let us of this *Kingdom* acknowledge our Part in this *Happiness* to be much above that of others; and let our *Zeal* for it rise in Proportion to the Value of the Thing itself. Let our *Government* by *Laws* be the chief Object of our *Worldly Concern*; and as we value that, let our Value, and Estimation, rise for the *Supreme Head*, and every Branch of the *Executive Power*, under which we live so happy and easy at Home, whilst they all join in making the *Laws* the Measure of their whole *Administration*. But above all, let our Thankfulness at this Time rise to the great *Disposer* of all Events, who hath given us a farther Prospect of the Continuance of the same Happiness to future Generations, by a great and important Victory Abroad, in which *Justice*, *Laws*, and *Liberty*, have triumphed over *Injustice*, and *Arbitrary Power*; and which we may reasonably look upon as a growing Security of our good Estate, against the Designs and Attempts of all who fight against it, both at Home and Abroad: Which *God* grant it may be, for the Sake of *Jesus Christ*, &c.

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*Concerning impartial Enquiry in Religion : and
the two Extremes of implicit Subjection and
Infidelity.*

S E R M O N VII.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, in Jan. 1712-13.

I T H E S S. V. 21.

Prove all Things : hold fast that which is good.

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THERE is no greater Sign of the sincere Intentions, and generous Design of the first Preachers of the Gospel, than those frequent Appeals, which we meet with, in their Preaching and their Writings, to the Evidences and Supports of that Religion, which they preached to the World. It shews that they neither knew, nor suspected, any thing like a Cheat, in it : It shews both that they thought it true, as well as important ; and that no Enquiry or Examination of any impartial Man could do it a Prejudice. When they preached to the *Jews*, who were to be convinced, in great part, by their former Notions, as
far

far as they were grounded upon former *Prophesies*; we find that they of *Beræa* were highly commended for searching the *Old Testament*, to see whether what the *Apostles* reported from thence, were true: and that their *Enquiring Temper* was esteemed an Instance of a generous Freedom of Soul. They of *Beræa*, saith the Author of the *Acts of the Apostles*, Chap. xvii. ver. 11. were *more noble*, i. e. of a better Make and Disposition of Mind, than some others. They were, as the Word imports, of too generous and well-tempered a Spirit, either to embrace blindly what was proposed to them; or to reject it as blindly without farther Enquiry. St. Paul, in his Speech before *Agrippa*, makes the same Appeal to the *Prophets*, *Acts* xxvi. 27. which implied in it the same Desire that the Matter should be determined by an *Impartial Enquiry* into them. When He preached to the *Gentiles*, who had the natural Light of Reason to direct them in their Searches, He did not appeal to those *Prophets*, of which they knew nothing; but to a Matter of Fact, into which they might enquire. Nor doth he expect them to believe that God shall judge the World, upon his own Word: but only as they should find it true, that he had given Proof of it, by raising *Jesus Christ* from the Dead. *Acts* xvii. 31.

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When *Christians* increased; and many Pretenders to mighty spiritual Gifts appeared amongst them, some of which were *Deceivers* and *Impostors*; the same St. Paul requires it of *Christians* in the *Text*, to prove all things that come to them, under the Notion of *Divine* and *Spiritual*: which he could not do with any Decency; unless it were so, that the *Christian Religion* itself desired and invited all Men to examine into the Proofs upon which it stood. St. John requires the same of *Christians*, to try the *Spirits*, i. e. to examine all Pretences to Miracles; and supernatural Revelation: and to receive, or reject, them accordingly, 1 John iv. 1. St. Peter is likewise very express, even with respect to *Christianity* itself; that *Christians* should be always ready to give an Answer to every Man that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them, 1 Pet. iii. 15. which supposed that their Religion and their Faith in *Christ* are built upon the best Evidence; and that their Faith was not required of them, but upon that Evidence; and that it is their Duty to enquire into, and remember, those Grounds upon which their Hope is built. And this whole Conduct was agreeable to that of their Master, our *Blessed Lord* himself: who constantly called upon those about him to examine into his Works; to try him whether he were from

from God or not ; and who declared, that the Guilt of those who rejected Him, consisted in their rejecting that Evidence He brought along with Him, and those Proofs which he gave of his Divine Commission. Neither did He, nor any of his *Apostles*, (as far as we have any Accounts of what they either said, or did) ever require of any Men to believe in Him, upon his own Authority or Assertion : or upon any Ground. separate from that which I have now mentioned ; I mean, the Evidences, and *Proofs* which He gave of the Truth of his Pretensions.

Now it is very observable, that there are *Two Extremes*, which Men have run into, with respect to this Matter. The *one* is, that of those Professed *Christians*, who, contrary to the whole Conduct of their Master, and his Apostles, require the Assent of their Inferiors to every thing which they please to define and settle ; as to a thing dictated by God himself : and this under the Notion of Authority and Infallibility ; without allowing any Questions, or Enquiries, about it. The other is the *Extreme* of those who, under Pretense of Examination, but, without the Reality of the thing, explode all Belief in *Jesus Christ* ; and recommend Infidelity to the Minds of Men. In the middle, between these *Two Extremes*,

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is that happy Temper of Mind, which renders Men impartial: which is equally an Enemy to that *Spiritual Tyranny*, which commands and terrifies Mankind into an open Profession of any thing; and to that partial and unequal *Bias*, which makes Men catch at any Trifle, and set up any little Objection, as of force enough against those moral Evidences, and plain Proofs, upon which the Truth of the *Gospel* relies.

In speaking farther, therefore, upon the *Words*, I have now chose, I shall be naturally led to these *Three Particulars*:

- I. To make some just *Observations*, relating to that Impartial *Enquiry* and *Examination*, spoken of in the *Text*.
- II. To consider the unreasonable Proceedings of *Those*, who are in either of the *Two Extremes*, I have just now mentioned. And,
- III. To draw some useful and important *Observations*, from what I shall have said.

I. I shall endeavour to make some just and useful *Observations* relating to that *Enquiry* and *Examination*, spoken of in the *Text*: and this, under these *Three Heads*.

1. The great Advantage, and Necessity, of *Enquiry* and *Examination*, into what we are,
in

in an extraordinary Manner, called upon to embrace, as *Religion*, and the Will of God. SERM.
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2. The Temper of Mind, absolutely necessary to this *Enquiry*, without which, we can neither embrace, nor reject, any thing proposed to us, with Justice, or Innocence. And,

3. The *Subject* of this *Enquiry*, with respect to the Offers made to us in that *Religion*, in which we have been educated.

1. I say, The great Advantage, and Necessity, of *Enquiry* and *Examination* into what we are, in an extraordinary Manner, called upon to embrace, as Religion, and the Will of God.

That *Almighty God* hath a Right to call upon his Reasonable Creatures in any Method, which may seem best to his Wisdom, cannot be denied. That it may *possibly* seem best to his Wisdom, to call upon them, by a *Person* sent into the World, and commissioned, in an extraordinary Manner, must be granted by all, who believe the Existence of any such *Being* in the Universe. That it is not only barely *possible*, but *probable*, that he would do so; is what will easily be assented to, by any who know the *Nature* of *God*, and consider the State of Man in this World. But, let us put it as low as possible. The bare *Possibility* of the Thing, is enough to shew us our Interest, and Duty, in this Case: Because it is always
the

S E R M. the Interest, and *Duty* of *Reasonable Creatures*,
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 The Advantage and Necessity, therefore, of this *Enquiry* we are speaking of, is the *Reasonableness* of it. And the *Reasonableness* of it lies upon this, that it is at least *possible*, that Almighty God may call upon his Reasonable Creatures, in an extraordinary Manner, that, if he should so call upon them, it is of the utmost Importance to them to regard his Call: that therefore it behoves them to attend to what comes to them in a very extraordinary Manner, under that Appearance and Profession; that it is their Interest, as well as their Duty; that Gratitude, as well as other Obligations, draws them to this; that, without it, they may possibly lose the greatest Opportunity of being made happy in the Favour of God; that from it they cannot possibly receive any Harm or Detriment either to Soul or Body; but that they will certainly receive at least the Reward of a good Disposition, and reasonable Temper of Mind. From all which, I say, follows the great Reasonableness, that is, to Reasonable Creatures, the great Necessity and Advantage, of *enquiring* into what is proposed to them, in a very uncommon, and a very extraordinary Manner, a Message from the *Great God*, whose Creatures they are; and Creatures, endowed by Him

Him with that Reason, which constantly directs Them to follow the safe and secure Method of Acting. This being premised, I come now,

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2. To speak of the *Temper* and *Disposition* of Mind which is necessary to all Persons, who would behave themselves, in this Affair of *Examination* and *Enquiry*, after a Manner acceptable to God. And this, I think, in one word, must be a *Disposition* of Mind, removed on one side, from *Credulity*, or a foolish Readiness to believe every strange thing that offers itself: and, on the other side, from those outward Vices; or that inward and unreasonable *Bias*, which are as so many Chains and Fetters upon the judging Faculties of a Man.

1. I say, It must be a Temper of Mind, removed from what we call *Credulity*; or a Readiness to believe every uncommon and strange thing, that offers itself, to be really what it pretends to be. This *Credulous* Disposition cannot be suitable to a *Reasonable Creature*: because it is so well known that many have been, and many more may be, the *Cheats* put upon a credulous World, by Men fitted for that Purpose. Reason hath some certain Maxims to appeal to, in judging: and these are all invain, unless they are regarded by an Enquirer. Invain is it, that we know the Nature

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Nature of *Almighty God*, if we must not examine, whether what professeth to come from Him, be worthy of Him. In vain is it, that we know *Virtue*, and *Vice*, to be direct Opposites; the *one*, the Happiness, the other, the Misery, of understanding Natures; if we must not consider whether the encouraging Vice, or the discouraging Virtue, be not a sufficient Reason for rejecting any Proposal made to us. In vain do we speak of *Truth*, and *Falshood*; or of the Differences of things; if all things be alike to us: and We swallow every thing that offers, without Distinction or Difference. *True*, and *False*, are, indeed, but *Mock-sounds* to a Man that believes every thing equally, that any Man, or any sort of Men, will put upon him for *Divine*. And if such an one pretends to enter into an Enquiry; it is only a Search after something to fill his Head with. It is not an *Enquiry* into what is built upon good grounds; or what not: but only a seeking after a little present Food for his Credulity.

Nor can this Temper of Mind be any more acceptable to *God*; than it is agreeable to the Nature of *Man*. For, tho' a Person of this Disposition will believe what comes from *Him*, and receive it as such: yet, this will be by Chance, and not by Reason and Evidence. This will be, because he is disposed and resolved,

ed to believe every thing: not because he finds this more reasonable, or more accompanied with Evidence, than the most monstrous Absurdities, or greatest Falshoods, imaginable. And then, this same *Temper* of Mind will lead the Man to believe the grossest Absurdities of *Almighty God* himself; and to embrace every Pretender with a Zeal equal to that which he shews for the Person who brings the justest Credentials, and the plainest Characters of God's Mission, along with him. Now, what Thanks, or Praise, can be due to such an *Enquirer*, with whom all will be *Equal*? unless, perhaps, which is often seen, the more unaccountable, or the more absurd and monstrous any thing is, the more fond and tenacious will he be, of it. The Result of such a Man's pretended *Enquiries*, is not what can be called *Faith*; which is a *Virtue*, as it is worked by due Means, and as it is the Consequence of our attending to proper Evidence; but rather *Superstition*, prompted either by *Fear*, or *Folly*, to take all *Pretenses* equally for *Truth*; all *Uncommon things* equally for *Miracles* wrought by God; all *Appearances* equally for *Realities*. This is such a Submission of *Reason* and *Understanding*, below the Dignity of Human Nature, as They only want to be exercised, who have nothing to shew that can bear an *Enquiry*, or stand

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stand the Test of an *Impartial Examiner* : but such an one, as cannot be required by Almighty God, who expects that we should distinguish His *Truths* from the *Falshoods* of Men ; and make a Difference between His Works, and those which are not so ; and receive with Discretion, as well as Humility, what He saith ; discerning between *Tricks*, and *Great Works* ; between the Person who truly bears his *Character*, and him who only pretends to do so. But,

2. On the other side, the *Temper* of an *Enquirer* into any Offers made to Mankind, in a very extraordinary Manner, in the Name of God, must be likewise far removed from those *Outward Vices* ; or that Inward *Pride*, and Unreasonable *Bias* ; which are as so many *Chains* and *Fetters* upon the judging Faculties of a Man.

I here mention, not only those notorious open *Vices*, which will often blind a Man's Eyes, and make him reject whatever contradicts or condemns them ; but also those more secret Sentiments of Pride, or Prejudice ; Resentment or Revenge ; which have often proved as strong Bars against receiving Truth, as the Prosecution of sensual Pleasure ; or the greatest Covetousness, or Ambition, or Worldly-mindedness. And I mention these particularly, because there have

have been Instances, even in these later knowing Ages of Men, who, merely out of an inward *Pride*, or *Resentment* against others, have denied the Evidences, even of *Mathematical Knowledge* it self; and rejected it, either in whole, or in part, because it hath brought some Shame upon themselves, and their own Understandings. It is really true, and what shews the Corruption of Human Nature, that Light shall be Darkness; that *Four* shall be more than *Six*; or any thing like to these shall be affirmed; nay, and pretended to be proved; by Men, who have *Pride*, or *Resentment*, or *Indignation*, working within. So that it is not enough to say, that a Man is not what we call commonly grossly *vicious* and *immoral*, in the way of *Pleasure*, or *Worldly-mindedness*, to prove him to be *impartial*, and free from *Bias*. For *Pride*, and *Revenge*, are Immoralities within, which bend the Mind as strongly as any other *Vices* in the World. *Personal Prejudice* will often put a *Bias* upon it, as powerful as *Debauchery*; and *Pique*, and *Resentment*, will hinder Eye-sight it self: and turn the plainest *Evidences* into *Doubts*, and often into *Falshoods*, with the Man that is actuated by them. Having thus mentioned the Dispositions of Mind which should be, in All who enquire into any Proposals offered to the World in God's Name;

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3. I shall now say something of the *Subject Matter* of our *Enquiry*, with respect to that Religion particularly, in which we have been educated ; or, the Proposals made to the World by *Jesus Christ*.

The *first* thing which offers itself, is this, Whether He gives sufficient Evidence of his coming from God. For, without this Foundation, all He saith, concerning the express Promises of God, and the Conditions of his Favour to us, will be, at best, no more than so many probable Conjectures ; or such Arguments as Reason and Philosophy can supply the World with. Under this Head, therefore, you must consider his Doctrine. If this be, in all respects, worthy of an Holy, Just, and Good God ; if it tends to the Interest, Ease, and Quiet, of Rational, Intelligent Creatures ; if it tends to the Interest, and Peace, of Human Society, by making the Members of it what they ought to be ; in a word, if it be the Revival of the great Law of Reason, upon stronger Motives than ever it was plainly promulgated upon, before : This will incline you, in favour of such a Teacher, to own that his *Doctrine* is worthy of God ; and bears upon it the Characters of that Being, by whom He professeth to be sent.

You must, in the next Place, consider the
Number,

Number, Nature, and Openness, of his great Works, to which He appealed constantly himself: particularly his *Resurrection* from the Dead; which he foretold, as the Sign, or Mark, upon which he would put the Truth of his Pretensions. You must enquire into the *Evidences* that you have, that the Historical Account of these things is worthy of Credit, as transmitted down to us.

These are the main Subjects of *Enquiry*, under this Head, relating to the Truth of our Lord's Mission. And, upon *Enquiry*, it will be evident to any one, that we have such *moral Evidences* of the Truth of these Histories, recorded in the Gospels, as would be thought sufficient to influence Human Conduct, in any other respect; and that, from the Truth of the *Facts* recorded in those *Histories*, an *Impartial Enquirer* cannot but find ground to believe in *Jesus Christ*.

The next *Subject* of *Enquiry* after this, will be, What it is, that He himself delivers to his immediate Followers, as his Religion, and the Will of God: Because, if we do not confine our selves to what is his *true* and *pure Religion*, we may wander eternally in Mazes of Human Contrivance, and never extricate our selves out of those Difficulties, which may be brought upon us, in our Enquiries, *To whom can we*

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go for the Words of *Eternal Life*, but to Him, who is the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life*? When we once acknowledge Him sent from God, it is at his Mouth only, that we can seek certain and useful Knowledge; to settle our Faith, and secure our Practice. It is to no Purpose for us to enquire after the Doctrines of Men, which *They* would make necessary to Salvation; when we have his Words, and his Decrees, to have recourse to. But, our only *Great Concern*, in order to the secure Conduct of our selves, is to enquire what it is that He himself layeth upon us, as necessary; what He himself requires of us in God's Name, to believe, or practise, as a Condition, without which we shall not be happy: and what his *Apostles*, in their *Epistles*, or Conversation, in the World, do expressly lay upon us, as a *Condition* of Happiness; and as received from their *Master*, to that very Purpose.

This *Rule* will be of vast use to us, with respect, both to such, as will be objecting Things against the Religion of *Jesus Christ*; and to such as will be imposing Things, as of Necessity to *Eternal Salvation*. For, as the *Enquiry* then is natural, Whether those Things objected against *Christ's Religion*, be really in it, as He delivered it to the World: So, if we find them not there; we cut off, at once, the whole Ground

Ground of the *Objection*. On the other hand, Are these Things, which others would impose upon *Christians*, as *Laws* of God and *Christ*, any where to be found in the *Gospel*, as delivered to the World, by *Himself*? If not; the Answer is easy to Those who would add, to his Laws, unreasonable Burthens; and bind them upon Men under the severest Penalties. Thus, when we see, in the *Gospel* itself, the great and only Design of bringing Men to Happiness, by believing in *Jesus Christ* as sent of *God*, in order to a constant and regular Practise of all Virtue; of whatever is reasonable and becoming: this will give us such a View of *Christianity*, as will make us able to reply to all *Objections* against it, taken from any such *Representations* of it, as are different from, or contrary to, this.

These two are the *Subjects* of Enquiry, to all who hear of the Offers made in the *Gospel*. Of *these* they are competent Judges, for the most part; if they will but apply the same Care, and Diligence, and Caution, which they use in any Worldly Affair. But when they are sent farther; and called upon, to enter into the particular Disputes between the several Sects and Parties of *Christians*; and, on every Side, required to give their *Assent*, with equal Positiveness and Assurance: When they are

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carried into the Difficulties of other Parts of the *Bible*, which have exercised the Understandings of the most learned Part of the World for many hundred Years, without being conquered, and explained; and when an *Explicit* understanding all these, in one particular Sense; (and this never to be settled, or established, with any Certainty;) is, equally required of them: Then, I confess, *Enquiry*, and *Examination*, may well seem frightful and discouraging. But then the *Question* recurs, for the Ease and Satisfaction of all Persons concerned: *viz.* Did *Christ* himself, and his *Apostles*, put these Matters upon the same foot with believing in *Him*; and doing the *Will* of his *Father*? Did He come into the World to require Impossibilities? Either to perplex the Understandings, or to distract the Consciences, of Men? When the *Question* is answered, What doth *He* require, as a Condition of Happiness; all such Points will be seen to be but *secondary* ones; in which Honest, and Understanding Men may differ; without losing their Charity for one another, or their Title to the Favour of their common Master.

If any one, therefore, should object, that *Enquiry* and *Examination*, into *Christ's* Religion, are full of endless Difficulties; it is easy, upon this Foundation, to give a satisfactory Answer to such an *Objection*. As,

1. It is a great Satisfaction to consider, that the very Disposition of Mind ready to receive Truth, when it appears so to be, is highly, in itself, acceptable to God; and will be rewarded by Him. So that, supposing the Search, or Examination, into the *Christian Dispensation*, to require Length of Time; or to be full of Difficulties: yet, here is a perpetual Satisfaction, that the Sincerity of Mind, and Intention, which every honest Man carries about him, is it self of that value in the Eyes of God, that it will make the Man the Object of his Favour. It is this inward Integrity, which God, who sees the Heart, values above all Things. Even under the Cloud of great Mistakes, God mercifully looks upon this; and is ready to reward it with his Favour. Otherwise, How hard would be the Condition of a weak and fallible Creature, if his *Eternal Happiness* were to be put upon his being in the Right in all Things; *i. e.* upon his being *Infallible*; and not upon his *Sincerity*, or *Honesty*; which is the only thing he hath thoroughly in his own Power? The best Human Understandings may err; and may be very slow in finding out and apprehending some Truths: and the meanest, much more. But then the meanest Understandings may have Honesty, and Sincerity, and Integrity, accompanying them. And supposing them

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not to have arrived at the Knowledge, or Perception, of the *Truth*, they are searching after : Yet, the very Sincerity, and Integrity, with which they are pursuing this Search, is the Thing which Almighty God highly values in them ; and which He will certainly reward. So that, you see, there is nothing discouraging in the supposal of the Length and Difficulty of a *serious Enquiry* into the Truth of the *Christian Religion* ; because the *Honesty*, and *Integrity*, of the *Enquirer*, will always render Him acceptable to God ; and intitle him to his Favour. But,

2. The *Enquiry*, I am speaking of, requires no length of Time ; nor contains any Difficulty in it, worth the naming. It cannot be long, before the Falshood of any Man's Pretenses, who comes, without Authority, as God's Messenger, must appear to a serious Person : either from his Doctrine carrying along with it the Marks of Falshood, and being unworthy of the Nature of God, or the Nature of Man ; or from his Want of sufficient and well-attested Works to prove his *Mission*. But where the *positive* Proofs are plain and evident ; and the moral *Evidences* such as convince Men, and influence their Lives, in parallel Cases, there is no need, either of a great Capacity, to comprehend these Proofs ; or of a great deal of Time,

Time, to perceive their Force. And this, I say, is the Case of *Christianity*; as instituted by *Christ*. S E R M.
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Nor ought these Proofs, and Evidences, to be esteemed so burthensome, or of so little Importance, as to be sent out of the Memory, or forgotten, under the Notion, that they were once considered, and found true: but always remembered, as the Reasons of that Hope, which is in *Christians*; according to St. *Peter's* Advice. For, What great Burthen can they be, to Men, who are concerned so much in them, as *Christians* are? What great Task, to any one of an ordinary Capacity, if he be questioned, Why he believes in *Jesus Christ*, and expects a *future State*? to answer, Because He himself arose from the Dead, after a Life of Holiness, and great Works; and after delivering a Doctrine to the World, worthy of God in all Respects? And, if he be asked, Why he believes these Things? to answer, Because they are *Matters of Fact*, delivered with the greatest Marks of Sincerity, by Persons, who professed they saw, and heard, what they relate; by Persons, who had no Interest to serve by this *History*; who endured bitter Persecutions, and Death, to attest these *Matters of Fact*: and because, in any other case
of

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of Human Conduct, these would be accounted the most prevailing *Evidences* possible? I say, Where is the great Burthen of this, to the Memory, or Understanding, of any common Man?

I doubt not, if the Riches and Grandeur of this World, were to be purchased upon such a Foundation; it would never slip out of the Mind of the meanest Person: but always be uppermost; and discover itself superior to all other Concerns that could come in his Way. And if any Persons should employ their Leisure, and their Wit, to persuade the World, that there is nothing in all this: not by invalidating such *Testimonies* about *Matters of Fact*; but by puzzling Mens Brains with abstruse, metaphysical, Shews of Reason; (of which the greatest Understandings are perhaps but very imperfect Judges, and the vast Bulk of the World no Judges at all;) I doubt not, but that if Worldly Interest were concerned, Men would presently answer to such Niceties; that they are only like such *Trials of Skill*, as some Disputers used of Old, to prove, that there could be no such thing as *Motion*; that these are not the *Arguments*, upon which *Human Life* ought to be conducted; and that the *Moral Evidences*, upon which such *Facts* rely,
are

are a more lasting and effectual Conviction, to a Creature so framed as Man is, than any, of another sort, that can be opposed to them.

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But I have said enough to shew you, upon what good Grounds, and with how much Justice, the *Christian Religion* may encourage, and demand, your serious *Examination* into it; and with what *Dispositions* of Mind, it ought to be performed. I shall proceed, in my following *Discourses*, to examine the *Conduct*, on one side, of Those, who bring a Scandal upon it, by putting their own Inventions, and Absurdities, upon an equal foot with it; and then cry out upon the *Danger*, and *Impiety*, of any *Enquiry into Religion*: and, on the other side, of Those, who reject it, without any apparent Reason; comparable to those *Evidences* which support it, and make it a Matter *worthy of all Men to be received*. For the present, I shall only add, that, if what I have offered, carries any Satisfaction along with it; if it leads to the Discovery of any thing sufficient to influence the *Conduct* of *Human Life*, and to revive that Hope, and Expectation, which we have been taught to have, in *Christ Jesus*: Nothing remains, but that, when we have *proved it*, and found it true, We hold *fast that which is Good*; and direct all our present

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sent Views, and all our Actions, by this Hope of Happiness to come ; which God, that ~~can-~~ not lye, hath promised to Those, who truly believe in his Son, and conscientiously obey his Will.

Concerning

*Concerning impartial Enquiry in Religion : and
the two Extremes of implicit Subjection and
Infidelity.*

SERMON VIII.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, in Jan. 1712-13.

I THESS. V. 21.

Prove all Things : hold fast that which is good.

I Come now, as I propos'd in the *Second* SERM.
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Place, to examine the *Conduct* of *Those*,
who are in either of those *Two Extremes*,
which I mentioned in my *last Discourse*.

The *first Extreme* is that of those *Professed*
Christians, who pretend, with great Zeal, that
They have a Right to demand an Unlimited
Submission to all their Doctrines, and Appoint-
ments : and condemn all *Trial*, and *Examina-*
tion, in their Inferiors, as a Crime of very
fatal Consequence. The *Conduct* of these Per-
sons, and the *Grounds* which they are known to

SERM. go upon, I design now to enquire into : and
 VIII. at the same time to shew the great Vanity, and
 Absurdity, of such monstrous Pretenses.

Now, in that *Church*, which alone *openly* declares this *Blind, Implicit, Submission* to all its *Decrees*, and *Determinations*, to be the true *Faith* of a *Christian*, You will presently find it all resolved into that *Infallibility*, and *Unerring Judgment*, which is affirmed to be lodged somewhere in it. If you ask the *Advocates* of this *Cause*, how they came by this *Infallibility*; and how they prove their Pretenses to it to be well-grounded: you will receive such sort of Answers as themselves would be ashamed to give, in any *Worldly* matter; or any *Affair* of common Importance.

1. Some of them will tell you, that our *Saviour* promised, *Matt. xxviii. 20.* to be with his *Church*, *i. e.* with *Them*, to the *End* of the *World*: and consequently, this *Church* is *Infallible*: and may justly claim an *Implicit Submission* from all Men, without any *Questions*, or *Enquiries*, about her *Impositions*.

To this it will be easy to answer, that the utmost that can be proved to be intended in that Promise of our Lord's, is this, that He would be assisting to his *Apostles*, and those who should succeed them, in the Propagation of his Religion, in their due Execution of that great and
 impor-

important Office ; that He would be their Sup-
 porter and Protector, in it. And, besides that
 nothing more than this can possibly be proved
 to be the Intent of this Promise : If you con-
 sider the *Absurdities* which must follow from
 the differing Turn that hath been given to this
 Passage, by the modern Pretenders to Infalli-
 bility, or to any *Authority* not to be gainsaid ;
 you will be the more convinced of the Weak-
 ness of this Proof. For they, who fix so en-
 larged and unbounded a Sense upon those
 Words, do, in effect, represent our *Saviour*,
 as speaking to this Purpose, “ *Lo, I am with*
 “ *you ; I will not only be your Director, and*
 “ *Guide ; but the Director and Guide of all*
 “ *who shall succeed you, in professing to teach,*
 “ *or propagate, my Religion. I will be with*
 “ *them, in all whatever they shall say, or in-*
 “ *culcate upon Men ; whether contrary to what*
 “ *I have taught myself, or not. I will be with*
 “ *them, in all their Contradictions of one to*
 “ *another ; in all their Absurdities and Follies ;*
 “ *in all the Methods they take of propagating*
 “ *Religion ; whether by Fire, and Massacre,*
 “ *or by Instruction, and Argument. Let them*
 “ *say what they will, let them do what they*
 “ *will, in their Zeal ; let them decree Black*
 “ *to be White, and White to be Black ; still it*
 “ *is my doing ; it is my Will it should be sub-*
 “ *mitted*

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“ mitted to: For *Lo, I am with them to the*
 “ *End of the World.*”



What Absurdities, We may justly ask, what Blasphemies, may not Men lay upon this *Text*, if they will put such an absolute and unlimited, Interpretation upon it? Whereas the Office of the *Apostles*, and those which succeeded them, in the *Ministry* of the *Gospel*, was that of being *faithful Witnesses* of what they had seen and heard of our Blessed Lord; of his Life, and Death, and Doctrine. They themselves had a Trust committed to them; and that was, to preach to the World his *Resurrection*, and his *Religion*: the *Religion* delivered to them by himself. They had no Authority to add to his Words, themselves; but their Commission was, to instruct Mankind, as they should have opportunity; and to impart to the World those concerning Truths which they had received from Him. This Promise, therefore, could not convey, even to *Them*, any Authority, in saying or doing whatsoever any of them pleased; but only an Assurance of Help, and Support, in their due Performance of that Office, which was intrusted to them; that of preaching the *Laws* of *Christ*, without adding to them, or diminishing from them. And that this was not a Promise of *Infallibility*, even to the *Apostles* themselves, in their whole Conduct, is plain from

from the Behaviour of *St. Peter*, after this, with respect to *Jew*, and *Gentile*; and from the Necessity *St. Paul* found, to withstand him to his Face, in that Part of his Conduct, which *St. Paul* thought to the Prejudice of the Gospel at that Time. Yet, notwithstanding this, we have seen this *Infallibility*, even confined peculiarly to *St. Peter*; and to his pretended *Succeffors*, considered as such: which He himself never claimed, in that absolute Sense, in which *They* have, since his Time, done it.

2. In the next Place, if you be not contented with such Interpretations of this *Place* of *Scripture*, as are utterly inconsistent with the Design of the *Gospel*; *They* refer you to another, in which Our Lord speaks, of *hearing the Church*, and of accounting those, who *bear it not*, as *Publicans and Sinners*, *Matt. xviii. 17*. And here again, they infer an absolute unlimited Duty, from a very limited and particular Expression; and shew as much Absurdity, as they can well shew, about the Interpretation of any one *Text* of *Scripture*.

Our *Blessed Lord* is here speaking of private Quarrels between Man and Man; and the Method of bringing Persons to Reconciliation one with another. And they presently interpret what is here said, as if it related to *Articles* of *Faith*; and an *Authority* in themselves, to make

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Terms of Salvation : Which Our Saviour never sends us to learn from any Man, or any Collection of Men, upon Earth; any farther than as they may faithfully report, what He himself, alone, was authorized to require, and ordain.

The Word *Church*, in this Place, plainly signifies a Congregation, or Assembly of Brethren, in whose Presence the Matter is related; and to whom it is referred : And from hence, *They* presently collect something about the *Church*, in another Sense of the Word ; as it signifies the *Ecclesiastical Rulers*, whose Business it is to perform *spiritual Offices* amongst *Christians* ; which was not indeed formed, or instituted at the Time when these Words were spoken. He that is not willing, after the Method here proposed, to listen to the Determination of his Neighbours and Fellows ; and to come to Peace and Reconciliation ; is said to be *One* justly to be looked on, as a very bad Man : And from hence, *They* absolutely and indefinitely conclude, that whoever shall not blindly give himself up to the positive Determinations which *They*, under the Name of the *Church*, shall please to make, about *Articles of Faith*, and *Terms of Salvation* ; whosoever shall not swallow all their Decisions, without any Questions, or Enquiries, is to be accounted

ed as an *Heathen*; and what is more, to be treated with such Severity, and such Inhumanity, as cannot lawfully be practised towards any *Heathen*; and such as the *Gospel* abhors, upon any Pretense whatsoever.

3. After this, they will carry us to those Texts, in which our Lord declares to his *Apostles* that, as his *Father* sent him, so sends he them; and that, *He that beareth them, beareth Him*; and the like: And from hence, *They* will conclude resolutely, that what they call the *Church*, hath the same Right to be heard in whatever it decrees about Religion, or that which it pleases to call Religion, as the *Apostles* themselves had, in delivering that to the World, which *Christ* entrusted to them. For, it is but resolving, that whatsoever was said to the *Apostles*, is to be interpreted as said chiefly to St. *Peter*; and after him, to the Rulers, of one particular Church in the World: And they think the Work done.

Now, there are several Ways of putting a stop to such weak *Sophistry* as this. The first is, That, supposing the *Apostles* commissioned, by such Expressions as these, to exact an *Implicit Belief* of every thing They should say; it doth not follow from hence, that They, who succeeded them in some Parts of their Office, can have such a Commission: Because their

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Assistances and Powers from Above, were greater than can be claimed, since their Time ; because They had the Power of *Miracles*, on extraordinary Occasions, to appeal to ; in a word, because many things were, and might well be, said to Them, which could not belong to any, but Themselves peculiarly.


But another thing is this ; which, I believe, will be found to be very true : That the *Apostles* themselves had no Authority to publish any thing, but what they had committed to them by *Christ*. They were Witnesses, entrusted with what He thought fit. They were not the Makers, or Decreers, of that Religion which was to be delivered to the World. But that was settled by our Lord himself before ; and only committed to them, to be reported to Mankind : And they were to be heard, only as they were the sincere Preachers of what they had received from him. Besides this, as I have already observed, the *Apostles* themselves never claimed, by Virtue of any such Words of our Lord, any Power of demanding an *implicit Belief* of what they delivered : But always referred to the Proofs they gave of the Truth of it ; always spake to *Christians* (in the Way, little used by those who pretend to succeed them in their greatest Powers,) of *Reasons* for their *Hope* ; of
trying

trying the Spirits; and of proving all Things, and holding fast only that which is good. So that the Result is this. Supposing the Apostles had required *Implicit Faith*; or an Implicit Submission to every thing they should decree: It would not be a good Argument, why others should afterwards do so; who had neither their Instructions, nor their Assistances. But this Supposition is groundless. For the *Apostles* claimed no Privileges, but to be heard as faithful *Relaters* of the *Doctrine*, and *Religion*, delivered to them by their Lord: And always encouraged their Auditors to examine into the *Reasons* of Things; and to try, and prove, in general, whatever came to them, under the Notion of Divine, and Supernatural.

So vast a Difference is there between *Those*, who had no Interest to support, but that of Truth and Righteousness; and *Those*, who have Worldly Pomp, and Grandeur, and Riches, to procure, or preserve, or increase. The one is for *Trial*, and *Examination*: Which never can hurt, nor injure Truth. The other is for an easier Method: For yielding up all Pretense to Understanding, and Reason; and going into that Way, which will encourage all the *Absurdity* and *Folly* in the World; and make Truth and Falshood, Light and Darknes, the same Things, and

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equally

SERM. VIII.  equally eligible. For, let there be but an Universal Readiness to swallow whatever shall be ordered; the *Question* among those who are to decree, will seldom be, what is reasonable; or what is fitting; or what is the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ*: But what is most for the Advancement of their own Power, and Honour, and Riches.

4. But, to return: If these *Texts*, to which the Pretenders to *Infallibility* in themselves, and an *Implicit Subjection* in others, appeal, seem to fail them at any Time; they then are forced to appeal to that hated Reason, which at other Times they so much explode. They will tell you, that it is highly reasonable and fitting, that there should be this Method of putting an End to all *Doubts*, and all *Controversies*; that Men, being subject to Mistakes and Errors, it is very necessary there should be somewhere a Judge, to whose Determination they should all blindly submit; and that, this being so necessary, to be sure, *Almighty God* hath been pleased to take care, that there should be such a *Judge*; and consequently such a blind Submission should be due from all Persons: And that, one *Church* only pretending to this Infallibility; it belongs to that, and to no other. But this way of treating Mankind, cannot be compared to any thing better, than

to the dealing of some *Empiricks*, who should set up upon this Bottom, that Mankind is subject perpetually to a Multitude of Diseases, which render their Lives very uneasy, before the Time of their Natural Death comes; that it is highly convenient, there should be an infallible Way of curing all these Diseases; that, therefore, it is not to be supposed, but that God hath, in his Providence, taken Care that there should be such a Way: And that, consequently, no other Persons but themselves, pretending to cure all Diseases infallibly, *They* ought to be looked upon, as the *Infallible Directors* of *Physick*; and all Persons concerned, ought to apply to them, in their Distress. But alas! this is but insulting the Misfortunes of Mankind, instead of curing them; it is a sort of triumphing over their Miseries, rather than shewing them a Way out of them.

For, in the *first* Place, supposing Man so framed by *Almighty God*, that, after all his best *Enquiries*, and his most serious Examination of things, he may err; this ought to teach us, that *Error*, in an honest Mind, is not that damnable thing which some Men would make us believe; that the great Design of true Religion, respects *Practice*, and not *Theory*; and that the Father of all Things

S E R M. knows how to make all reasonable Allowances
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 of his imperfect Creatures.

In the *next* Place, the Argument is not good, that, because a thing would be highly convenient, therefore *God* hath certainly ordered it. For it is plain in Fact, that there are Multitudes of Unhappineffes, and Inconveniencies, belonging to weak and mortal Men, for which He hath appointed no certain Remedy. And, in the Case before us, it is fully sufficient to say, That He punishes Men only for their wilful, and obstinate Sins ; and that He leaves their unavoidable Errors, and Frailties, to be the Subject of their mutual Charity, as they are of his own divine Compassion.

But then, in the *third* Place, supposing the *Premises* ; How shall we know, Whither to have Recourse ? Supposing such a *Judge*, or such an *Infallible Church* ; where shall we find it ? Why, certainly, they answer, Where there is but *one*, that so much as pretends to it, *That* must be it. Which is, as I said just now, as if an *Empirick* should tell us, There is no other Person in the World, that so much as pretends to cure Diseases infallibly, besides myself : Therefore, I certainly can ; and you ought all to come to me. As if the Modesty, or Humility, of *Others*, who cannot thus in-

sult

sult the common Sense of Mankind, were an Argument against them; and, as if *They*, who pretended to most, had always most Reality in them.

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But, supposing another *Judge*, or another *Church*, should set up for *Infallible*; and claim the same Subjection; (which is not an impossible Supposition;) Whither should we then go? The Argument would be destroyed: And we could take no other Method, but to examine, *first*, Whether there is Reason to expect to find any such *Infallibility* any where; and, *secondly*, which of the *Pretenders* to it, have the real *Title*. And this would reduce us to that Necessity of Examination, by Reason, and Revelation, which I am contending for; and destroy the End for which this Argument is alledged.

But again; Supposing us to come, ready furnished with all *Implicit Submission*, to the only *Church*, which ever pretended expressly to such an *Authority*; even in this very *Church*, with all its Boasts, *They* cannot tell us exactly, where to apply for the Comfort of this *Infallible Authority*. Some send us to *One Person* at the Head; some to whole *Councils*; and some to *both*. Whichever way they pitch upon; it is not more certain that Light is contrary to Darkness, than that what hath been decreed
by

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by *one Pope*, hath been reversed by *Another*; that what hath been determined in *one Council*, hath been annulled in *Another*; and so, forwards and backwards, from the Beginning, to this Day. To what Distress then, would they reduce Men; first, to persuade them, that a weak frail Man, or a Collection of fallible Men, are Infallible, and unerring in their Decisions: And then to lead them a Round, from Contradiction to Contradiction; and from the Belief of one Age, to the contrary Belief of another; without Satisfaction, and without End? How much more like *Men*, and like *Christians*, would it be, to acknowledge themselves to be but *Men*; to leave the unavoidable Errors of Mankind to the Mercy of God, as He himself hath done; and to claim no more Subjection, than what *Reason*, and the *Gospel*, give them a Title to.

I must not here forget *another Pretense*, which comes much to the same: *viz.* That the great Divisions, and Differences of Opinion, amongst other *Christians*, are owing to their not acknowledging such an *Implicit Subjection* to this *Infallible Judge*. The *Answer* is easy, and plain: For, 1. That this would be no certain Cure, is evident, from those many and high *Divisions*, amongst Themselves, who plead for this Subjection: Which are, in these
last

last Days, come to a very great and flaming Highth, in many Instances. And, 2. How can it be otherwise, when in *one* Age, Favour is shewn to one Opinion; and in *another*, Favour is shewn to the contrary: When *one* *Infallible Judge* is of one Party; and the next that comes, is of another: And when Determinations are perpetually made, according to Interest and Favour? And then, 3. If *Jesus Christ*, and his *Apostles*, have not so plainly determined many Points: but that there is room for Differences amongst *honest Believers*: Why should any *Judge*, after them, pretend to settle Religion, better than *They* did; or, why should *Christians* be harder, and more severe, upon one another, than *God himself* will be upon any of them? Sincerity, and Uprightness of Heart; Righteousness, and Holiness of Life; Humility, Charity, and universal Love and Friendship: *These* are the Things, which the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, seeks after. And the truly honest *Christian* needs not be afraid of the *Terrors* of those, who take not their Maxims from the *Doctrine*, or *Example* of *Christ*; but from this World, and the Interests of it.

I mention these *Terrors*, because, when every Art fails, then, last of all, the Ignorant are to be *terrified*, into this Submission:
And

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And to be told, that it is a Sin to entertain the least Doubt about this *Authority*; and such a Sin, as will be their utter and eternal Ruin. It is paralleled with rejecting the *Gospel*, and opposing *Christ*: And so *They* are to make up by *Terror*, what is wanting in *Argument*. To which, I confess, nothing can be replied; but that there is nothing like all this in the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ*. He came into the World to reconcile Men to God, by leading them to Amendment, and to all Holiness. Many Works did he perform, to convince the World of his *Authority*. He appointed his *Apostles*, and *Ministers*, to go on in the same good Design. He feared not the *Light*; and therefore appealed to it. He hath given no *Commission* to any, to pretend to a *Lordly Authority* over the Understandings, or Consciences of Mankind. But, as his Religion consists not in Niceties; and aims at nothing but the Happiness of Mankind; and is founded upon *Truth*: He hath left it to the Evidence that supports it. Vast and unconceivable Prejudice hath been done to it, by Men's pretending to be wiser than He; to add to his Institutions, and his Doctrines: And to impose upon Men their own *Additions*, under Pretense of an *Incontestable Authority*; and under any sort of *Worldly Penalties*.

I have

I have now sufficiently shewn you the great Absurdity of *Those*, who have run into this *Extreme* : And the Contradiction of it to the Behaviour of our *Lord*, and his *Apostles*. I shall take the next Opportunity to speak of the *Other Extreme*, I mentioned at first.

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Concerning

*Concerning impartial Enquiry in Religion : and
the two Extremes of implicit Subjection and
Infidelity.*


SERMON IX.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, in Jan. 1712-13.

I T H E S S. V. 21.

Prove all Things : hold fast that which is good.

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 **I**N my last Discourse, I considered and examined, the Grounds, upon which those professed *Christians* go, who set up Themselves for *Guides* to their Brethren; and require, under the Penalties of this World, an implicit, and Blind Submission, without any Enquiries to all their Determinations. And, I hope I shewed you, how void of all Support, either from the Light of Reason, or the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, such Pretenses are; how contrary to the Nature and Interests of Truth, which ever desires to be looked into; and how contrary to the Conduct of our *Lord*, and his *Apostles*, who encourage, and applaud, a sincere

cere and inquisitive Temper, with Respect to Religion. SERM.
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Secondly, I come now to the Conduct of Those Men, who are in the *Second Extreme*, I mentioned at first; and to consider those *Grounds*, upon which such Persons profess to go, as under the Appearance and Pretense of Examination, but, without the thing itself, reject the *Gospel*; and recommend Infidelity to the World. And this I shall do, in such a Method, as that these pretended *Grounds*, which they go upon, may appear; and, at the same Time, the real Design, and very great Partiality of those who go upon them. Of this *Conduct*, I shall give *Three*, or *Four* particular *Instances*: Which are constantly seen to be the chief and avowed Supports of this *Extreme*.

1. One principal Point, I shall mention, is this. When the different or contradictory Notions, or absurd Opinions, of *Divines*, or other *Christians*, are represented so, as to lead unwary Persons to make them an *Argument* against the *Gospel* itself: It is very evident, that the Design is not to recommend *Truth*; but to prejudice Men's Minds against what ought only to be proposed to their fair *Examination*.

I confess, it is very shameful to consider, that *Men* should not be contented to be *Men*; and

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and to think for themselves; *One*, one Way, and *Another*, another; that so many should, with Violence and Passion, be seen to lay the same Stress upon their own Interpretations, and Conjectures, which they do, upon the main Design, and plainest Declarations, of the *Gospel*; and others, to oppose them with their own particular *Schemes*, of another sort, in the common Methods of Heat and Violence. But these are the *Movements* of *Human Nature*, got loose from the Guidance of *Reason*, as well as of the *Gospel*: And therefore, let *Them* take the Shame of this, to themselves, who deserve it. But what is this to *Christianity* itself: Which contains in it, neither their *Doctrines*, nor their *Spirit*?

If a Man should collect all the contradictory Opinions, and absurd Notions of the *Philosophers* of Old; and of Those who profess to follow only *Natural Light*; and represent the foolish manner, in which the *Text* of *Reason* hath been explained by its *Interpreters*; and if these Absurdities should be made an Argument against *Reason* itself, and its plainest and most uncontroverted Maxims: Would not this be more absurd, than even those Absurdities themselves, which are pretended to give Ground to it? Would it not be easy to reply, that *Reason* is very ill treated by such *Oppo-*
nents;

nents; that the *Law of Reason* remains firm and stable, notwithstanding that its professed Interpreters have erred grievously; that it is highly absurd to deny the first Principles of all Science, and all Certainty, because Some who profess to build upon these Principles, have grossly mistaken in the *Consequences* they have drawn from them; that it is the most unfair, and unsincere Thing in the World, to lay *that* upon *Reason* itself, which ought to be charged solely upon the Weakness, or Passion, of Those, who, professing to follow it, could not keep up to it, either through Incapacity, or Inadvertence, or Prejudice, or Vice. But, though the same Persons will not, (as indeed they ought not to,) allow this to be a good Argument against the *Use of Reason*: Yet we find them, too often, treating the *Christian Religion*, after this manner.

Let us then, upon this Occasion, apply what hath been said, in the *Case of Reason*, to *that* of the *Gospel of Jesus Christ*: And we may safely put it upon this *Issue*; which is but equitable and reasonable. Let the *Gospel* be charged with nothing, but what itself contains. Let *Jesus Christ*, and his *Apostles*, who were the Preachers of his Doctrine, be charged only with what themselves preached and taught. But let not the Absurdities, or

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Foillies, of *Christians*, be laid at the Door of that *Religion*, which, in its Original, knows them not. By this means, the ground of such Sort of *Objections*, is wholly removed. For the *Answer* will presently offer itself; when the *Enquiry* is about the Truth of our Blessed *Lord's* Pretensions; and not about the Understanding, or Conduct, of his Followers. What is this to the Purpose? What, if *Christians* have thus contradicted one another? What, if they have opposed, anathematized, and destroyed, one another, by a furious Zeal for their own particular Explications of their *Master's* Doctrine? What, if many Absurdities have been vented, and propagated? How very unfair, and unjust is it, to charge those upon our Blessed *Lord*, or his *Apostles*, who have nothing like them in their preachings; who have none of these Contradictions; none of these Absurdities; in their *Settlement* of our Religion: And never gave the least Encouragement to any such Conduct, in their Followers?

I grant, indeed, if the Dispute were about the Behaviour, the Understanding, or Impartiality of all who have professed to interpret the *Gospel*; or to frame Schemes and Systems of it: If our Faith were to be made for us by These; then, the Objection would have
some

some Force; and these Contradictions, and Absurdities, might well be so often brought in. But, God be thanked, this is not the Point. What hath been said by weak, and fallible Men, though affirmed with never so much Positiveness; though backed with never so much Worldly Authority; tho' strengthened with all the Penalties of this World, and of that which is to come: All is nothing to Men heartily concerned about their *Religion*. The *Point* is, what our *Lord* himself requires; and what his *Apostles* themselves deliver, as from *Him*. This is the important Enquiry: And this ought to be strictly observed by All, who profess to examine into his Doctrines. It is a most equitable Rule, not to lay That upon his Religion, which He never himself put into it: Because it was He himself, who was to deliver it from the *Father*, ready framed; and because He never gave Authority, even to his *Apostles* themselves, to make any Addition to that *Scheme* of Doctrines, and Salvation, which He delivered to *Them*. St. Paul expressly affirms this, that the *Apostles* themselves were only *Stewards* of the *Mysteries* of God: In whom He affirms *Faithfulness* to be the principal Point. Moreover, it is required in *Stewards*, that a Man be found faithful, 1 Cor. iv. 2.

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Nothing, indeed, can be more unjust, than, in pretended *Enquiries* after the *Truth* of *Christianity*, to cast upon our *Lord* himself, and his Religion, all those *Contradictions* which have been vented by any of his professed Disciples; or those *Absurdities*, which, weak Men have unhappily fastened, as *Interpretations*, and *Commentaries*, upon what He said or did: Unless the *Case* were so, that the *World* had no *Account* of his *Proceedings*. but what was to be picked out of the *Commentaries*, and *Systems* of *numberless Writers*. Whereas, it is far otherwise. His *Gospel* lies open. His own Declarations of what God absolutely requires, are as plain as well can be, before *Art*, or *Passion*, *Ignorance*, or *Learning*; have perverted them. If any thing can justly be offered against his own Conduct, or his own Doctrine; He himself refuseth not to hear it. But it is but just to demand, that the Faults of others be not imputed to the Faultless; nor the Follies of Men to *Him*, who never encouraged them.

They who will not consent to this *Equitable Rule*, may as well charge all the Vices, and Villainies, of any professed *Christians*, upon the *Gospel* itself. But then, the true Method is, to look into *that*: And it will be quickly found, that they are not only not encouraged, but absolutely

absolutely condemned, there. How would it be liked, by some Persons, if all the Luxury, and Intemperance, and Wickedness, of those who have professed themselves *Epicureans*, should be charged upon *Epicurus*, their Master. Would it not presently be answered, That this could not fairly be done: Because *He* certainly placed Pleasure and Happiness, in *Temperance*, and many of the *Moral Virtues*: As is plain from the most *Authentic Accounts* We have, of his own Life, and Doctrine: which ought to be the Measure of our Judgment and Censure of him. I cannot indeed deny, but that this is common Justice, due to all. But if his Advocates will contend for this, in *his* Case, who certainly taught Men to cast off that Regard to any superior Being, which might have been a great Bar against *Vice*, and a great Inducement to *Virtue*, amongst his Followers: Then, certainly, must they themselves be ashamed of not following the same Rule, in judging concerning a *Greater than He*; *One*, who had all his Personal Virtues, in Perfection, with none of his Follies and Absurdities; and *One*, who taught a Doctrine worthy of all Men to receive, upon Principles able to support them in the *Practice* of it.

I grant, indeed; nay, I contend for it; that these great *Differences* of Opinion,

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amongst many Honest and Learned *Enquirers*: that these Contradictions to one another, and absurd Notions, fixed by many of them upon their Religion; are excellent Reasons for mutual Forbearance; great Arguments that God will not judge *Christians*, at last, by the *Truth* of their *Speculations*, but by the Sincerity and Integrity of their Searches after *Truth*: And strong Inducements to all, to look impartially into the *Gospel* itself; in order to know what our *Lord* himself hath taught, and what He requires. Thus far these Differences, and Absurdities may justly be urged. But when, under Pretense of all this, these *Contradictions* have another Turn given to them; when many Insinuations against the *Gospel* itself, are interspersed; when some of the greatest of these *Absurdities* are represented as the *Fundamentals* of the *Gospel* itself; and, at the same Time, *Infidelity*, and *Atheism*, artificially recommended, as the Result of Just Reasoning: Then, it is more than suspicious, that these Particulars are so carefully collected, merely as *Arguments*, or *Prejudices*, against the *Gospel* itself. But there cannot be imagined a more unjust Procedure, than this is: Which is no better than casting off a *Religion*, not for what *is* in it: but for what *is not* in it;

I mean,

I mean, the Weaknesses, or Absurdities, of some who have professed it. But again,

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2. Of a piece with this *Procedure* is, the picking up Multitudes of little *Stories*, which have not half that Evidence to support their Truth, which the *Facts* of the Gospel have; and which, supposing them true, signify nothing to the first Institution of *Christianity*: And the embellishing and venting *these*, in such a Manner, as manifestly tends to the Prejudicing the Minds of unwary Persons, against *Christianity* itself. An *Art*, in which many of those excel, who seem disposed to banish all Belief of the *Gospel*, out of the World! But, how unjust this is, a very little Consideration will shew us.

For, is it a wonder, that, in the course of many hundred Years, many Things have happened, in the Conduct of Men, (who are ever weak, and often prejudiced, and passionate,) which may be justly enough turned into *Ridicule*; or which cannot be justified by the Rules of that *Religion* which they have professed? Suppose, for Instance, that *some*, in process of Time, have turned *Christians*, for low Ends; or with false *Views*, and base Designs; for worldly Advancement; or to find a Refuge from the Sins which they had committed in other Professions: Or, suppose that

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Others have turned Apostates from Christianity, because of the vile Behaviour of many Christians; and their pretending to greater spiritual Powers, than could be justly claimed by them: Or, suppose that a professed Christian hath sometimes talked, as if he had little Belief of some or other of the main Articles of Christianity: I say, supposing these, and the like Facts; yet, What are these to the Gospel, as delivered to the World by Jesus Christ? In that, there may be sufficient Reasons for honest Men to believe in Him; notwithstanding that, many Years after his Death, some became Christians upon other Grounds. In that, there may be sufficient Reasons against any Believer's apostatizing from his Religion; notwithstanding that there have been Apostates, upon other Reasons, which do not at all affect his Religion, as He left it. In that, there may be sufficient Evidences of a Resurrection; notwithstanding that some of his professed Followers may have talked, with some Doubtfulness, or great Uncertainty, about it.

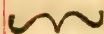
I might here observe, that such sort of *Stories* are not always reported from the most credible *Authors*; or that they are often represented, and magnified, beyond what Simplicity, and Integrity, can justify. But I choose to put it upon this, That, supposing the Truth of them,

them, or of any like to them; the *Gospel* may, SERM.
 and doth, still, stand untouched, and free IX.
 from any Disadvantage from them. Let it be
 true, that it hath been professed upon weak
 or worldly Grounds, by *some* Men; let it be
 true, that some Things in it have been disbe-
 lieved by others. These are not the Points
 in Debate between the Men who believe it;
 and those who profess to reject it: But whe-
 ther, there be not great and sufficient Argu-
 ments for our embracing the Profession of it;
 and for receiving *Him*, who instituted it, as
 sent from God. Whoever pretends to bring
 a Disreputation upon it, ought, in Justice, to
 take his Arguments, if he can find any, from
 what is really in it, as it lies in those Books
 themselves, which profess to acquaint us with
 it, in its pure Original. But when, instead
 of this, Men have recourse to little *Stories*,
 and *Tales*, of Men, or of Things, many Years
 after the *Institution* of it; as if they were
Points which ought to affect the *Gospel* itself:
 This is a certain Sign of the utmost Prejudice;
 and not of any thing like an impartial and just
Examination; which the *Gospel* itself never
 refuseth to undergo. Again,

When a long and tedious work is made
 about *false Miracles*, and *pretended Wonders*,
 and Impositions upon the Senses, and Under-
 standings,

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standings, of Mankind; and, at the same Time, no Distinction allowed in Favour of those recorded, in the *Gospel-History*; nay, when many Insinuations are given as if all Pretences were alike; and especially, when *Infidelity* and *Atheism* are, at the same Time, complemented as the Effects of great Sagacity, in those who have professed them: Then is it a plain Sign, that the *Gospel* is not recommended to be ingenuously and fairly examined; but to be condemned, upon unjust and unequal Grounds. For, before the *Gospel Miracles* can be justly condemned, the Point would be, to shew, that our *Lord* refused to do his great Works before his *Adversaries*, or those who had an Heart to examine them; as *Impostors* have done: That He avoided the Light; and required of his immediate Followers *Faith* without *Sight*: that He did not give sufficient Evidence to those about Him, that He was neither an *Impostor*, nor an *Enthusiast*; that his Conduct was like that of those, who refuse all *Trial*, and give manifest Proof that nothing of those great Things are true, which they pretend in their own Favour. For, how doth it follow, that, because there have been many *Cheats* in the World, therefore there is no such Thing as *Truth*? or, that nothing truly great and uncommon, sufficient to demon-

strate

strate the Favour of God, hath ever been wrought in Confirmation of what is excellent and good; because many vile Persons, have, at several Times, for worldly Ends, and secular Purposes, played *Tricks* with Mankind; and imposed upon the Minds of the Vulgar? Why should this be produced as an Inlet, and Introduction, to Infidelity? Or, what is there like it, in our *Lord's* Conduct, that can justify such a Procedure?

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The *Design* of *Impostors* is presently seen through: To keep up a temporal Authority; to maintain or increase, *Power*, or *Riches*. But *He* could not but be void of any such Design; whose Low Estate, and utter Renunciation to every Thing in this World, and certain Expectation of Death itself for his Preterences, were as remarkable, as His Great and Mighty Works themselves. The *Doctrine* of *False Pretenders* appears plainly to tend to magnify themselves; and to set up a gainful Kingdom over Men's Consciences. But *His Doctrine* was Humility, and Contempt of this World; a preferring one another in Love: It led to a Scene of Self-denial, in many Cases; to the Expectation of Rewards in another State, and of Persecution, in this. He aimed at no other Kingdom over Men, but the Government of their Passions, and of their Actions, by the Rules

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Rules of Reason; and the Hope of Glory; and the Fear of God's Displeasure. And, therefore, the Suspicion of *Imposing* upon the World could not lie upon Him: As the Appearance of it plainly lies upon other modern *Pretenders to Miracles*. And, therefore, His Works themselves, should be examined: Which, neither, in their Number, nor Kind, bear any more Resemblance to the Pretended Works of *Imposers*; than a vast Variety of Beneficent, Divine, Charitable, Open, Acts, do to one single Trick repeated yearly; or to Empty, Useless Appearances; or to Clandestine, and Dark Proceedings, without any Witnesses, but such as have an Interest to serve, a worldly Cause to carry on, by endeavouring to support the Credit of them. This makes a vast Difference: And should, in common Justice, be taken into the account, by all who pretend to examine into so important a Matter, as that of Religion.

If it should be replied, that it is for the worldly Interest of those who have corrupted *Christianity*, and made the *Riches* and *Grandeur* of this World a Part of the *Gospel*; that it is for their Interest, and for the Continuance, and Support, of all that they shall think fit to put upon Mankind, under the Notion of *Christianity*, that the Miracles recorded in the *Gospel*,

Gospel, should have Credit given to them; and be supported by such Persons: Which may bring a just Suspicion upon them: I answer,

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1. *No just Suspicion*, certainly, with any, who will consider, that it is plain, from all *Antient Writers*, that the *Gospels* were in being; and the *Miracles* in them recorded, before any such Abuses came into *Christianity*; nay, long before there was any Temptation to impose upon the World; that is, long before the *Princes*, or the *Favours*, of this World came into the *Church*; whilst little besides *Persecution* could be expected by *Christians*; and little Hopes could appear of ever having it otherwise: That, from the Beginning, during all that Scene, when nothing was promoted by these *Miracles*, but Believing in a *Crucified Saviour*, whose Kingdom was not of this World; then, I say, these *Miracles* were recorded in the Gospel-History. From whence it is plain, that they have no Relation to any such Corruptions, as came not into the *Church*, till very many Years after these *Miracles* were done; and these *Books* were written. But then,

2. The *Miracles* which *Christ* himself did, can confirm no Doctrine, but what *Christ* himself delivered to the World. They have no more relation to what hath been, or may

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may be, fixed upon his Religion, by any who profess to follow Him; than if such Persons were not called *Christians*. This is very plain to all who weigh Things equally. For, otherwise, they might be supposed to support *Pretences* and *Doctrines*, directly opposite to his own: Because *Christians*, so called, (I mean, many of those who profess themselves so,) are capable of being moved by Worldly Considerations, to enter into Measures directly opposite to those of his Institution; and to contradict his good and great Design, as much as if they were called by any other Name in the World; the Name *Christian* not altering either Men's Principles, or their Manners. It being, therefore, impossible that our *Lord's* own *Miracles* can be the Support of Doctrines, or Designs, directly contrary to his own; it being certain, that they confirm nothing but what he designed they should confirm; viz. His own Pretensions, and his own Religion, as delivered by *Him*; and, consequently, that they cannot support any thing contrary to the Laws of God, and Universal Righteousness: There can be no Ground of Suspicion in *His* Case, nor any Excuse for bringing them under the same Head, with Works only pretended to be done; and this, manifestly for the Support of *Designs*, which neither *He*,
nor

nor his *Apostles*, acknowledged to be agreeable to his *Religion*. Nay,

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3. Those who have taken upon them to add their own Inventions to his *Religion*; and to appeal to any sort of *Tricks*, or pretended *Miracles*, for the Support of those Inventions; and for the keeping up a *Temporal Interest* in the World; have never had the Assurance to appeal to our *Lord's* own *Miracles*, for the Support of what they have aimed at; but have always thought it necessary to have *additional Miracles*, for *additional Articles of Faith*; and *New-Works*, to support their *New-Designs*. So that they themselves give no ground to any Person to suspect our *Blessed Lord's* Works; as having any unworthy Design to support: But plainly confess, by this Procedure, that the *Miracles* which *He* did, go no farther, and were designed no farther, than to support the *Doctrine* which *He* himself taught; and to promote the End for which *He* came into the World.

It is, therefore, I say, manifestly unjust, to put the *Miracles* of our *Blessed Lord*, recorded in the *Gospels*, upon the same foot of Suspicion, with *Those*, which not only want the same sort of *Testimony*, as to their *Reality*; but also, are professed to be done, in order to support Worldly Ends, and such Designs, as we cannot

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cannot but judge to be unworthy of God: When, at the same Time, it must be acknowledged, that no such Designs can be supported by our *Lord's Miracles*; nor any indeed, but that noble Design, worthy of God, of Redeeming us, first from the *Power*, and then from the *Punishment*, of our Sins. To return,

4. When the *Persons*, who pretend to be great Enemies to the *Notions*, and *Speculations*, which have been brought by some *Christians* into Religion; nevertheless, embrace, and greedily catch at, any subtle, metaphysical, and abstruse, Ways of Arguing, about Necessity, and Fate; or such like *Subjects*; not level to the Capacities of any Number of Men; and perhaps not certainly intelligible to Men of great Understandings; when these puzzling, and mysterious Arguings, are advanced, and set up, against all the *Moral Evidences* of the *Gospel*; when, together with the Pretence of rejecting every thing that is not plain in Religion, fine and unintelligible Subtilties of *Disputation* are introduced: Then, is there Reason, from such contradictory Proceedings, to suspect great Partiality, and little Love to a *Just Examination* of Things. When, instead of these *Moral Evidences* of *Christianity*, other sort of Arguings are put into Men's Heads;

of

of which they never were, nor ever will be, tolerable Judges: This is a *partial*, and unequal, Procedure; and what the same Persons would not perhaps be guilty of, in any other Case, but that of *Religion*. For the Conduct of Human Life is guided and influenced by such *Moral Evidences*, as are sufficient to put Men beyond reasonable Doubt; by the Testimony of credible, and unexceptionable, Witnesses; and the Absence of all real Ground for *Suspicion*; and the like. Of which Things, a little common Sense makes most Men pretty good Judges.

It hath pleased *God* to deal with Men, in the *Christian Dispensation*, in this easy Method; in which they are so well satisfied in many other Cases. That our *Blessed Lord* lived, and died, and arose again; that, before his Death, He wrought many and great wonderful Works; and this with a Design, and *Doctrine*, worthy of God; we learn from such *Testimony*, as hath no Objection against it, that would be accounted good, in any other parallel Case. Now, supposing that it had pleased *Him* to have taken another Method; and to have spoken to us in an Abstruse and Subtle Way of Reasoning; without any such *Facts* or any such *Testimonies* to them: I should not have wondered, if the same Persons should

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have been the first Complainers; and the first to have represented this *Method*, as not likely to come from *God*; as too hard, and too unintelligible, to the *greatest Part*, if not the *Whole*, of Mankind. But if this would have been reasonable; how much more so it is, not to neglect the *Facts*, and *Testimonies*, upon which the Gospel relies, for the Sake of any of those subtle Speculations, or Arguings, which are wholly unintelligible to the greatest Part of Mankind; and by which the *Conduct of Human Life* is never guided, in any considerable Instance: Not to enter into a *Method* which cuts off all *Examination* into the *Truth of Christianity*, at once; and builds an *Infidelity* upon *Cobwebs*, as thin, or as intricate, as any *Modern Schoolman* ever wove for his own *System of Christianity*.

Thus have I produced several Instances of a very unreasonable *Proceeding* against *Christianity*: Which doth not tend at all to the *Examination* of the *Truth* of the Gospel; but to the positive *Condemnation* of it, upon such Grounds as, I have shewn you, cannot reasonably affect the Foundation upon which that is built. And, as unreasonable, as these are; yet, (as far as I can see, or hear,) They are the chief of the *Modern Pretences* of *Unbelievers*, whenever they are endeavouring to bring a Disreputation

reputation upon the *Gospel* itself. This is so true, that, if you take away their little *Stories* of Persons, and Things, many Years after *Jesus Christ*; their Harangues about Absurdities, and Contradictions, of some weak and passionate Men, which are not in the *Gospel*; their long and jocose Accounts of *Modern Miracles*, and *Tricks*, played to support Designs, which the *Gospel* doth, not only not own, but, condemn: I say, that, if these be all taken away; together with a Word or two of mysterious Reasoning, (of which the Bulk of Mankind are not Judges;) nothing of Importance will be found to remain against the *Gospel* itself, or those *Evidences* which support it. And this must be ever accounted a vast Advantage to *Christianity*; as it was delivered, by *Christ*, to the World.

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*Concerning impartial Enquiry in Religion : and
the two Extremes of implicit Subjection and
Infidelity.*

S E R M O N X.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, in Jan. 1712-13.

I T H E S S. V. 21.

Prove all Things : hold fast that which is good.

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IN my *Former Discourses* upon these *Words*,
I. I have, under the *first* General Head,
shewn you the *Duty*, and *Nature*, of a Just
Examination into our Religion.

II. Under the *second*, I have considered,
on *one* Side the *Conduēt* of those professed
Christians, who would impose their own *Addi-
tions* to the *Gospel*, as of equal Importance
with it ; and this by Way of such *Authority*,
and *Infallibility*, as to demand an *Implicit Sub-
jection*, without any *Enquiries* : And, on the
other Hand, the *Conduēt* of some others, in
the contrary Extreme, who seem to have re-
jected the whole of *Christianity*, under the
Shew,

Shew, but without the Reality, of *Impartial* and *Just Examination*.

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III. I propose now, to draw some useful *Inferences*, or *Lessons*, from what hath been already said.

I. The *first* that offers itself, is this, That it is but too probable, that many, and especially the Chief, of Those who are in the *former* of the *Two Extremes*, which I have treated of, have no more real Belief of the *Truth* of the *Gospel*; than Those who professedly reject it. I would not be understood to mean, that there may not be many simple, and otherwise honest Men, acting, under *These*, for the bringing all the World to *Implicit Subjection*; who may think that they truly believe the *Gospel*, and are doing God Service: Or that there may not be many sincere Persons amongst those who profess this *Implicit Subjection*. But, if you examine into the great Worldly Interest; the Riches, the Power, the Grandeur, that are supported merely by these *Additions*; as well as into the Cunning and Understanding of *Those*, who enjoy the greatest Share of these Advantages; and consider how plain a Contradiction, their whole Scheme is, to *Christianity* itself: You cannot forbear suspecting, that all their Zeal against others; all their *Persecution*

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of those they call *Heretics*; all their Madnesses, and Extravagancies; their *Inquisitions*, and *Tortures*; are founded upon *Infidelity*: and that nothing could induce them to be guilty of such Proceedings, but an Opinion that this World is their all; and that there is no Account to be given in another.

That *Truth* is not their Concern, is very plain: Because *Truth* neither wants such *Advocates*, as outward Torments; nor is ever helped by them. An outward Profession may be obtained and forced by them. But then this will be only *Hypocrisy*: For the inward Persuasion will be rather diverted another Way, than towards any thing that is to be worked into Men by such Methods. Fire and Faggot; Imprisonment, and Confiscation of Goods; Hardship and Pressure; Hunger and Thirst; Cold and Nakedness; may make Human Nature yield; and extort a Confession from the *Lips*: But the *Heart* will be farther from going along with it, than it would be, were the Methods of Gentleness, and Goodness, applied to it. The only thing, therefore, aimed at, by the great Patrons of *Implicit Submission*, is an outward, uniform, Profession of the same Things; *that is*, an *Agreement in Sounds*: Which is no more to *Truth* itself, than the most distant Thing in the World,

World. Were the Belief of the *Truth* of the *Gospel*, the Matter aimed at; or Faith in *Jesus Christ*, the great Design; nothing of all this could be seen in the World. But because so much of this is seen; that whoever will profess the same Things, and utter the same Sounds in Public, is safe, and well received by those who gain most by *Implicit Subjection*: Therefore, I say, is there little Reason to judge that any sincere *Belief* of the *Gospel* itself is either embraced, or aimed at, by Them.

This is so apparent in all those Countries, where *Implicit Subjection* is at its Highth, and yet *Polite Learning* flourishes in any Degree; that is a very common and professed, as well as profane, Notion amongst themselves, that *Faith* and *Folly* go together. The true Account of which, is this, That they think of no other *Faith*, but that which is conversant about the monstrous Opinions, and ridiculous or absurd Tenets, which support the Power and Riches of their *Ecclesiastical Governors*: And have lost all Regard to the *Gospel*, in its Simplicity; and all Desire to enquire into it. For,

2. As there is little Reason to suspect any true *Faith* amongst those, who, either gain so much of worldly good Things, or, avoid so many worldly Evils, by *Implicit Subjection*:

S E R M. So the patronizing such a *Blind Faith* naturally
 x. tends to a *Total Infidelity*; as a *Total Infidelity*
 tends reciprocally to the Support of such a
Blind Faith, and *Implicit Subjection*. For, Is
 it not very evident, that, when Men are kept
 in such Ignorance, or in such Dependence,
 that they hear little, or nothing at all, of any
 other Religion, but of one which sets up an
Infallibility amongst weak and passionate
 Men; which is big with such Doctrines, as
Transubstantiation, and the Worship of *Saints*
 and *Angels*; which vests Men with a Power
 of *indulging* Sins before they are committed,
 and absolutely *releasing* Men of their Guilt
 after they have been committed; which tends
 directly to nothing else, but to magnify the
 present Grandeur, and increase the worldly
 Pomp and Riches, of its chief Patrons; and
 when the Profession of such a *Religion* as
 this, is not left to Men's Choice, or to be de-
 termined by *Argument*; but is to be forced
 upon them by the Application of outward
 Evils; which, in many Cases, are terrible,
 and next to intolerable, and yet not to be
 avoided: I say, when this is the Case, Will
 not this View of Things incline many to wish,
 that *Religion* may all be as much without
 Foundation, as these Points which they cannot
 embrace, or believe? Will not this Inclina-
 tion,

tion, and Worldly Interest, carry them still farther: And blind their Eyes, or their Hearts, so that they will not see any Difference; but condemn equally, in their Thoughts, all that is called Religion; and cast off that Belief of a *Future State*, and that Expectation of a Judgment to come, which they see others to have cast off before them? Will they not thus be carried away, by Inclination, and worldly Hopes and Fears, to turn *Infidels* first; and then *Implicit Believers*? First, to believe *nothing*, that they may with the more Grace profess to believe *every thing*.

It can hardly be supposed otherwise, amongst those who will not go out of their Way far, to search after *Truth*; and have been educated, or find themselves placed, in the midst of a *Religion*, that imposeth such Absurdities, and applies such terrible Instruments of Persuasion: And have Understanding enough to see, that there can be no Ground for such Doctrines, or for such Methods of teaching them. It can hardly be supposed, I say, but that such Persons must incline to a *Disbelief* of every Thing; in order to profess all that is required of them: Which can be done by none but such, with so much Grace, and so good an Appearance. Thus doth the Cause of *Implicit Submission*, backed by *Terrors*, and *Torments*, naturally beget *Infidelity*

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SERM. *fidelity* in the Mind, as well as *Profession* from the Lips: And this *Infidelity*, in order to requite the Kindness, gives itself back again, as the main Support, and Prop, of every thing relating to the *Scheme* of *Infallibility*, and *Submission*. It teacheth *Some*, to lay every thing they can think of, upon their *Votaries*, or *Inferiors*. And it teacheth *Others*, to bear every thing that can be laid upon them, rather than to hazard their *all* in this World; which they take to be their only Concern. It not only permits; but deviseth, and frames, the greatest *Usurpations* for the Benefit of *Superiors*, And not only this: But the same *Infidelity* frames and fashions, likewise, a Spirit of *Slavish Submission*, and *Outward Subjection*, in *Inferiors*, ready to receive every such *Usurpation*; of what Sort, or of what Nature, soever it be.

Thus is true Religion, between the *one Extreme*, and the *other*, stabbed to the Heart; and left without Life, or Strength. For the pleasing Part of Religion to *Almighty God*; and that, in which alone He delights, being the *Voluntary Reasonable Submission* of a Man, to *Him*, and to his *Laws*: Where Force prevails, and the Argument is taken from Terror, and Human Punishment; what Place can remain for any Freedom of Choice? And, without Freedom of Choice, where is *Virtue*,

or

or *Honour*? And, without *Virtue*, where can S E R M.
be the Approbation of God? X.

Is it not, therefore, an excellent *Topic*,
which we often hear of, that these *Methods* of
Severity keep all Things *quiet*; that they en-
force an outward *Uniformity*; that they pro-
cure an external good Appearance; that they
banish all Differences, and Disputes; and the
like? But, for *God's* Sake, What is all this to
Truth, and *Religion*: Which are seated within;
and are of no Account, but as they are chosen,
upon due Grounds, by Men? Not but that,
with all these *Terrors*, many still are, and
must be, the Differences; which often are
seen to flame out, to a great Degree of Vio-
lence. But, What if they did not? Is *Truth*
Nothing? Is *Religion*, within a Man's Heart,
Nothing? Is Wickedness, or Cruelty, ever the
less so, because it keeps Men in Awe? Is the
Power of some, and the *Vile Submission* of
others, the Point aimed at by our *Saviour*?
And, Is the *Worship* of his *Father*, in *Spirit*,
and in *Truth*, (which He declareth to be what
God *seeks after*,) all dwindled into an *Exter-
nal Agreement*, without any Regard either to
Understanding, or to *Truth*? Are his *Spirit*;
and his *Method* of propagating his *Religion*, by
preaching his *Doctrine*, and *Works*; found at
last to be unworthy of God: And to be ex-
changed

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changed for the more rational Method of *Torture*, and *Terror*? Is all the Poverty, and Misery, caused by *these* Methods, to be forgot? Is all the *Atheism*, and *Infidelity*, and *Wickedness*, which are occasioned by *these*, not to be charged to the Account? But, a mere *Outward Submission*, and *tacit Subjection*, of *Terrified Creatures*, to be magnified, as a Blessing; and to be called *Religion*: And the *End* of the *Son of God's* living, and dying, in the World? No, It is impossible to conceive a greater Indignity to *Religion*, than this is: And impossible for any, who understand what they say, to treat it after this Manner, without having first thrown off all the Impressions both of *Reason*, and *Revelation*.

Since, therefore, this *Implicit Subjection* to every thing ordained by fallible Men, cannot be supported and carried forward, but by *Force*, and *Tortures*, and great worldly Inconveniencies; and since, when it is so supported, it so evidently tends to worldly Ends only; and since, on these Accounts, it is the great *Introduction* to a *Total Infidelity*, which both teacheth *some* to enjoin it, and *others* to submit to it: It is evident, that it is so far from being a Part of *True Religion*, that it is the greatest Enemy to it; and ends in that *Inward Infidelity*,

Infidelity, the outward Profession of which, it pretends to forbid, and put a stop to.

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3. The great Injury, therefore, done to *true Religion*, by both these *Extremes*; and the *Patrons* of them; is plain and evident. The *one* sort, professedly cast it off: Charging upon it Things which it knows nothing of; and many of them, the Corruptions, which *Infidelity* itself hath fixed upon it. And the *other*, do not indeed professedly cast it off: But, under Pretence of supporting it, destroy all inward Sincerity, (without which it is dead,) by outward Force; and introduce an *Hypocrisy*, which must be founded upon a *Disbelief* of all *True Religion*.

The Methods, in which they *Both* deal with it, are highly injurious. *They*, on one Side, pretend to talk mightily for it: They magnify its Glories: and are full of Zeal for its Honour. But then, they will have no *Questions* asked about it: Which is no great Honour to what they profess themselves to believe as a Truth. But the Reason is, because by *Religion* they mean their own *additional Doctrines*, not to be found in the *Gospels*; (which, therefore, they will not have too generally looked into:) And such Doctrines as they think may not stand the Shock of an Enquiry; but, when they are weighed in the Balance, may

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may be found wanting in some great and essential Points belonging to Truth. While the *Others* charge upon *Religion*, the Faults and Abuses of Men; and bring it into Disrepute that Way. This is highly injurious, Because *Christianity* itself invites, and desires, our *Examination*, and *Trial*; and only as it is found to be *Truth*, claims to be received: And because nothing ought to suffer, in our Judgments, for the Sake of what doth not belong to it. Yet, I think, verily, the Injury is greater to *Religion*, from *Those*, who forbid and hinder all *Enquiries*; than from *Those*, who profess to encourage them, though themselves are not just and impartial in them: Because One, who is under the Direction of the former Sort, hath nothing left but to profess to believe equally every thing dictated by his Guides; (no Difference, in Matters proposed to Him, being allowed;) whereas, the general and professed Principle of the *Others* may lead a Man, without *their* Prejudices, to a sincere Enquiry into the *Gospel*; and to an hearty Profession of it. But, though the *Injustice* of both these Methods of Proceeding, be manifest; yet,

4. I must observe, that, amongst such as think justly, and will be but at a little Pains in so important a Matter, *Christianity* itself will

will receive no Disadvantage from either of them. For, when a Man comes to examine, and finds that the *Gospel* itself refuseth not the Light, and loves not Darkness; that, on the contrary, it gives Encouragement to honest Minds to *try*, and *see*, whether it be not worthy of God: A Person, I say, who finds this, will not put it upon a Level with any *Religion*, which hates the Light; which refuses and condemns all *Examination* into it; which relies upon *Force*, more than upon *Argument*; and allows not to any the least Judgment concerning what concerns them so much. When, in the Prosecution of this *Enquiry*, the Man finds that the *Doctrine* of it is so far from being absurd, that it is highly reasonable; so far from tending to any base worldly Purposes, that it only promotes the true, and lasting, Interest of all Mankind equally: He will not place it to the Disadvantage of such a *Religion*, that *Some*, who profess to own it, promulgate and enforce upon Men, *Doctrines*, absurd in themselves; pernicious to the World; and tending to aggrandize the *Imposers* only. When He finds the *Miracles* that support it, beneficent, great, open, Acts; done in the Sight, often of Adversaries, and always, of Competent Witnesses: They will not suffer, in his Opinion, for the Sake of
of

SERM. of *pretended Miracles*; done in a Corner;
 X. before only Friends; and *These* whose world-
 ly Interest they support. The great Difference, I say, will, by these Means, presently appear, to an *Impartial Man*, between a *Religion* that loves to appear in the *Light*; and one that *worketh in Darknefs*. Nay, the unjust Procedure for the Support of the *one*, will be an Advantage to the *other*: And help to satisfy him, that the *Gospel*, which useth different Means, and very contrary Methods, of recommending itself to the World, hath not any of those Marks of *Cheat*, or even Suspicion, upon it, which will ever stick upon any Religion, that requires a *Blind Submission* to every thing it enjoins.

Again, When the *Enquiry*, and *Examination*, of an honest Man, convinces him, that there are none of those *Tricks*, and *Follies*; *Absurdities*, and *Contradictions*; in the *Gospel* itself, which some Persons generally so much talk of, when they are designing to bring a Disrepute upon it: He will think it a great Advantage to *Christianity*, that They, who would disgrace it, do not think it fitting to treat it, as they find it delivered by its *Author* to the World; but bring in Matters, wholly foreign to it; and not so much encouraged by it, as by any *Religion*, or *Infidelity*, that is, or can be,

be, set up in Opposition to it. And, as he finds no such Things in the *Gospel*, as are sometimes urged as an *Inducement* to a *Disbelief* of it: So, He will be apt to conclude, that They, who are Adversaries to it, could find but little amiss in itself, and but little to object against it, taken either from the Life, or Doctrine, or Works, of its *Author*; when they are obliged to have Recourse to Doctrines, and Stories, which have no Foundation in them, in order to weaken its Credibility.

Thus may the *Procedure* of Men, which is unjust in itself, and of bad Consequence with weak Minds, tend to settle the Judgments of more considering Persons, in Favour of *Christianity*. That which was designed to overcloud the *Gospel*, may make its Glory shine. That which was intended for the Temporal Ends of Worldly Men, may advance the eternal Good of those who are sincere and upright: And, that which was designed to pull down, may build up. The Errors and Follies of *Some*; the Insincerity, and Madness of *Others*; the Partiality, and Injustice of *Others*; may all administer an Occasion to an honest and sincere *Enquirer*, to believe and practise that *Gospel*, which He finds, in itself, free from those *Errors*, and *Barbarity*, which *Some* would place upon a Level with it; as well as

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from

SERM. from those *Follies* and *Wickednesses*, which
 X. Others would charge upon it.

5. One more *Inference* I shall make, from what hath been already said ; and that a very interesting one, and very important to all *Christians* ; viz. Since we see that the greatest *Objections* against *Christianity* itself, are taken from the *Conduct* of *Christians*, and of *Those* who pretend to believe and receive it ; since we see that the main of what is insinuated against the *Gospel*, is taken from the Behaviour of *Those*, who profess it : since all their foolish Notions, or Additions to it ; all their furious Zeal and Madness ; all the Violence and Ill-will against others ; all that is bad amongst professed *Christians* ; is perpetually made Matter of *Objection* against *Christ* himself, and his *Religion* : How unreasonable, and unjust soever this be : yet, how much doth it behove us all, not to give an Handle, or Occasion, to any, who wish not well to the *Gospel* itself, to attack it through our Weaknesses, Follies, or Passions ?

We must consider, that We are not guiltless of their Unreasonableness in thus dealing with the *Gospel*, on our Accounts : If we unnecessarily, or unreasonably, lay Stumbling-blocks in their Way ; and prejudice them, by any Conduct of ours, against the Way of Salvation.

tion. For, as all *wicked Christians* must expect to answer, at the great Day of Judgment, for their Sins, and Wickednesses; not only as they respect *themselves*, but *others* also; not only as they are Transgressions of their holy Law, but as they tend effectually to make Men blaspheme that holy Name, by which they are called; not only as they make *Themselves* guilty before God, but as they are seen to encourage, or promote, what is bad in *Others*: So, must all *Christians*, who teach, for the *Commandments* of God, the *Doctrines* of Men; who make their own *Additions* to the *Gospel*, of equal Importance, and Authority, with the *Gospel* itself; who bind upon Men heavy Burthens of their own contriving; who enlarge the *Faith* once delivered to the *Saints*, or contract the *Charity* absolutely enjoined to *Christians*: So, must all, I say, who act this Part, expect to be judged, at the last Day, not only for their great *Presumption*, as it respects *Themselves*; but for the evil Effect of it upon *Others*; for the *Infidelity*, and *Atheism*, and *Wickedness*, which, by means of their Misbehaviour, hath entered into the World.

How little Prejudice would there be left, in the Minds of the Worst of Men, against the *Gospel* of *Christ*, if nothing were found amongst *Christians*, but what is to be found there; if

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the *Spirit* of the *Gospel* were always seen, where the Profession of it is; if the *Gospel* itself were truly the *Creed*, and the *Law*, to *Christians*; the only Measure of their *Faith*, and the only Rule of their *Actions*; and if Love and Benevolence swallowed up, or covered, all lesser Differences, amongst those of the same Denomination: How few, I say, would there then be left, of the *common Topics* against *Christ's Religion*; and how many of those Handles, which unreasonable Men lay hold on, against it, would then be taken away?

But, when another Scene is perpetually before the Eyes of the World; when many of the *Stewards* of *Christ's* Dispensation, make themselves *Lords* and *Masters*, and claim an equal *Authority* with *Christ* himself, whose *Stewards* only they are; when *These* are found beating their *Fellow-servants*, (as the *Parable* expresseth it,) and abusing them, when they should be giving them their *Meat in due Season*; when *Worldly Ends* are brought into the most *Heavenly Religion* that ever appeared amongst Men; and any *Doctrine*, though never so absurd, if it be for the Increase of Power or Riches, is enforced upon Men, by the severest *Penalties* of this present World; and all, under the common Name of *Him*, whose *Kingdom*

dom is not of this World; when the Faith of Christians is new settled, by weak and fallible Men, many hundreds of Years after Christ left it settled by Himself; and the Charity of Christians so confined, by these new Settlements, and by the Decrees of those who make them, that Christians of later Ages have been as effectually known by their hating and abusing one another, as their great Master desired they should be, by their loving one another: When this is the Case, I say, then we find Infidelity gaining Strength, not from any Arguments of its own, but from those which it draws from the Conduct of professed Believers; and many induced to doubt of, or cast off, the Whole, (which they are not at Leisure thoroughly to examine,) for the Sake of these additional Evils; which, though not belonging to Christianity itself, yet, will ever be treated of, by the Enemies of it, in such a Manner, as if they did.

Thus, it is probable enough, that Julian himself became an Apostate, from the Christians of his Time, rather, than from Christianity itself: I mean, that their Behaviour growing then worse and worse, and especially their Animosities against one another, occasioned his Relapse; and provoked the unthinking Man to what He could not have been moved to,

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upon the same Accounts, had he consulted the Gospel only, and the Conduct of that *Master*, whom they professed to follow. And how much, how very much, of the *Atheism*, and *Infidelity*, of these later Ages, hath the *Church of Rome* to answer for? Whose *Additional Articles of Faith*, and *Rules of Discipline*, backed with the Terrors of this World, and fixed upon *Christ* himself by his *pretended Vicegerents*, cannot but, with Men who think enough to see their Falshood and Barbarity, and yet not enough to distinguish between *them*, and *Christianity* itself, weigh down the Scale to the Side of a *Total Infidelity*: Which must be charged, not only upon the *Infidels* themselves, but upon all who have given them this Handle.

Christians cannot too often think of that Denunciation of their *Master's*: *Woe be to the World, because of Offences: i. e.* Great Mischief, and Evil, will come to Men, by *Stumbling-blocks*, laid in the Way of the Gospel; over which They will fall; and be themselves condemned, for not taking more Care and walking with more Caution. *For it must needs be that Offences will come; i. e.* For, such is the Corruption; and such are the various Passions, and Designs, of Mankind, that they will often lay such *Stumbling-blocks* in the Way
of

of their *Brethren*. But, *Woe be to that Man* SERM.
by whom they come. Woe to that Man, or that X.
Church, or Body of Men; who, without Reason,
and without Authority, cast in the Way
such Stumbling-blocks, as are the Occasion of
falling to Others; the Occasion of their turning
out of the Paths of Christianity itself. This
one Declaration of our Lord's, should, methinks,
make all Persons afraid of deviating one Step
from those Lines which He hath marked out
in his Gospel; or of venturing to enforce upon
Men, any thing which is not truly and plainly
His.

Our Church, which was reformed from
Popery; not upon the Bottom of Infallibility,
or Incontestable Authority, but upon that of
Appealing to Christ himself, in his Gospel;
professeth that the Scriptures are the Rule to
all Christians; and that nothing can be lawfully
required of them, to believe, or practise, as
peculiar to their Religion, but what is in
Them plainly enjoined. If any, therefore, of
the professed Members of this Church, have
gone farther; either pretending to Powers,
which the Gospel gives them not; or imposing
Systems of Religion, about which the Gospel
is not exprefs; either enforcing doubtful things,
as certain; or Matters, not made necessary by
Christ, as of Necessity to eternal Salvation: It
is plain, the main and general Principle, by
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which the *Church* itself desires, and declares, that all ought to be conducted, doth by no Means bear them out; but, indeed, condemns and disapproves them.

Let us, therefore, consider, seriously, that as often as we forsake this *Rule*; as often as we pretend to be *Wise above what is written*; and, in any Degree, or any Sort, to add to *Christ's* Laws, or new model his *Doctrines*; as often as we do, in any Measure, approach to the *Violence*, or *Cruelty*, or *Censure*, which we constantly condemn in *others*, when they practise them against *ourselves*; as often as we abuse and vilify our Brethren, *judging others before the Time*, instead of *judging ourselves*; as often as we make, what should be the Subject of *Charity*, and *mutual Forbearance*, the Cause of *Unchristian Fires*, and *Unchristian Animosities*, against One another; in a word, that as often as our *Lives* contradict, in any known Instance, the *Moral Laws* of our *Religion*; or our *Understandings* set themselves up for *Infalible*, or *Decisive*, *Guides* to all others: That, so often we are probably making our *Religion* itself suffer in the Opinion of *others*; raising up new Enemies to God, or making his old Enemies, a-new *Blaspheme*; and laying such *Stumbling-blocks* in Men's Way, as may be fatal to many about us. Let us consider this seriously;

ously; together with the great Work we have upon our own Hands, to prepare ourselves for that tremendous Day, when we hope that God will *not be Extreme to mark what is amiss in ourselves*: And We shall not easily be induced to have any Hand, upon any Pretense whatsoever, in setting Men at a Distance from that *Holy Gospel*, by which otherwise they might be made happy; or, in increasing that *Infidelity*, which might otherwise happily end in embracing the *same Faith*, and laying hold on the *same Hope of Salvation*, which We have ourselves embraced, through *Jesus Christ*, our Lord.

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The present Delusion of many Protestants, considered.


SERMON XI.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, Novemb. 5, 1715.

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And for this Cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie.

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THIS Day hath so just a Title to every Sentiment, and every Signification, of Joy and Gratitude, We can possibly entertain or express, as We are *Christians*, as We are Protestants, and as We are Men; that I could heartily wish that every Thought and every Token of Uneasiness, might be banished far from it. But since it is so, that it bears upon it, not only the Signatures of God's repeated Mercy to this Nation; but the Marks of an Ingratitude and Stupidity, perhaps, not to be equalled in all History: Since it doth not more
effectu-

effectually call to our Mind that Great Wonder of Providence, to which it gave a Beginning within our own Memory, and which our own Eyes have seen compleated; than it points out to us that Scene of Iniquity and Rebellion, which is now opened, in order to perplex and unravel that lovely Frame of Things, which Heaven itself hath wrought for us: The Commemoration of the Blessings of this Day, cannot but lead our Thoughts, at present, to the Attempts of Those, who would rob us, and all our Posterity, of them; and must create in us an Astonishment, mixed with Pity and Indignation, at the Conduct of many amongst Us, from whom the Ties of Religion, the Solemnity of Oaths, the Security of all that is valuable in this World, the Interest of their Native Country, and all the Obligations of Honour, and Conscience, required and demanded another Manner of Behaviour.

It is a Conduct, indeed, which can hardly be resolved into any thing, but a *Fatal Delusion*, sent down upon them, as a just Punishment of their Ingratitude for the greatest Public Happiness that ever any Nation enjoyed; and will at least give us a sensible Demonstration, that, as in Religion, according to the *Apostle*, a perverse and a wilful Opposition to *Truth*, naturally, as well as by the Justice of God,

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God, leads, in the End, to a Belief, and Confidence, in every Thing absurd, and unreasonable: So, in worldly Matters, Ingratitude, and Insensibility, under the Public Blessings of Providence, lead Men, Step by Step, to mistake Evil for Good; to court Misery for Happiness; and to pursue their own Ruin, under the Notion of something desirable: And that, in both Cases, it is but just in Almighty God, to punish Men for their wilful Baseness of Spirit, by leaving them entirely to the Conduct of it; and, in the *Scripture Phrase*, to send Them, who will not know the Value of Truth or Happiness, freely offered to them, a *strong Delusion*, that they should believe a Lie; and be led blindfold, by the greatest Absurdities, against all the Evidences of Reason, and Experience, into the Paths of Ruin and Destruction. Nor were there ever indeed, more surprizing Instances of this, than what our own Eyes may, at this Time, behold, in this Kingdom.

The Wonder is not, that the professed Members of the *Church of Rome*, unite their Hearts and Hands; and leave no Methods, whether of Deceit or Violence, unattempted, for the Service of that Cause, which, in all their lowest Fortunes, they never suffer to be removed out of their Sight; that *They* put on all the Forms of Complaisance, and Dissimulation,

tion ; of Civility and Good Humour, even to s Hereticks themselves, to inveigle them into their own Ruin ; that They flatter, and promise, and swear, every thing that is good and kind, to their Fellow-labourers ; and, at the same time, enter into all the Resolutions of Destruction, and Desolation, whenever the Opportunity of Power shall come. This is nothing, but what is worthy of Themselves, and of that Church, to the Slavery of which They have devoted themselves. It is no more, than what They fairly, and publickly, profess ; if Protestants will but open their Eyes, and see it. It is their Religion, and their Conscience : It is inculcated upon them, as the Great Condition of their Acceptance with God, That no Good-nature of their own ; no Obligations from others ; no Ties of Oaths, and solemn Assurances ; no Regards to Truth, Justice, or Honour ; are to restrain Them from any Thing, let it be of what Sort soever, that is for the Security, or Temporal Advancement, of their Church.

The Case with *Them* is not, as it is with Protestants, who, to their Shame, have indeed been unmerciful to one another, on all Sides : But then, their mutual Violences have been rather the sudden Effects of Passion and Revenge ; And still there hath been a Principle left, by which,

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which, in the Time of calm and cool Reflexion, there may be Hope of curing so great an Evil. And every Sort of them, when they are undermost, disown, and disclaim, the Lawfulness of all such Proceedings.

But in the *Romish Church*, it is firmly settled, upon never-altered Principles; it is an Established *Article* of Religion; equally believed, and owned, and inculcated, in their Adversity, and low Estate, as in the Highth of their Power. It stands unrepealed, upon Record; and it is confirmed by Experience, that *They* are most likely not to fail of the Honours of Saintship, and the Applauses of that *Church*, who act the most uniformly, and the most steadily, upon that Foundation. Every Weapon they use, is sanctified; every Instance of Fraud, and Perfidiousness; every Degree of Violence, and Fury; is consecrated. It is not only allowed; but first recommended, and afterwards rewarded.

This, therefore, is not the Wonder, that Men devoted to such a *Church*, keep up to their antient Character, and Profession; that They dont deflect a Step from the Glories of their *Illustrious Ancestors*; that They are not at all moved by the Peace and Interest of their Country; nor by that Security and Quiet, which even Themselves might enjoy, by the
Indul-

Indulgence of a Government They will not Support; that *They* are still the same implacable Adversaries; and still set on Fire, by the Principles, and the Zeal, of their Religion, to scatter Ruin, and Destruction, round about them; and to deprive their Neighbours of every Thing that is Good and Valuable.

But the Wonder is, that so Many of Those, who call themselves Protestants; and of Those, who have violently wrested the Name of *Church-men*, out of the Hands of their Brethren, and appropriated it to themselves, as its only Advocates and Patriots; of Those, whose Cares for its Interest, and Fears for its Safety, have been swelled and magnified, above those of all around them, to a Degree almost Romantic; and even of some, amongst them, who have solemnly given their Faith to the *present Establishment*, and not only sworn themselves to *That*, but abjured all contrary Pretensions: That so many, I say, who will take it amiss not to be called *Protestants*, and much more amiss, not to be called *Church-men*, have shewn too great a Readiness to join, some, their Hands, some their Hearts, and some, their Indifference, with the worst of Enemies, in the worst of Causes; and to be deluded themselves, as well as help to delude others, into utter Destruction, by the weakest, and most groundless Insinuations, and

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all the most absurd Methods, that ever any Cause was supported, and propagated by. It cannot, therefore, but be of Use, at this Time, to consider more particularly,

I. The *Cause*, now openly avowed by our Enemies.

II. The *Marks* of a *strong Delusion*, in the *Behaviour* of *Those*, whom I have just now mentioned, with relation to it.

I. The *Cause* is now openly avowed. It is no longer either denied, or dissembled. It is, to set upon the Throne of these Kingdoms, a *Pretender*, at whose first Appearance in the World, the whole Nation of *Protestants*, of all Parties, and all Orders, and all Degrees, was filled with universal Dissatisfaction, and Uneasiness, by the Concurrence of all the suspicious Circumstances that could well be united in one Matter of Fact; and whose *Imaginary Title* our Laws abhor, as absolutely inconsistent with Themselves, and ruinous to our whole Constitution: And not only this, but a *Pretender*, who, to make Him the fitter to govern this *Protestant* Nation, and to be the Patron of this *Protestant* Church, hath received all his first, and deepest Impressions, from *That* of *Rome*, to which He hath devoted Himself with an uncommon Bigotry.

And

And this Church, from which alone He hath S E R M.
 learned all his Obligations, and every thing that X I.
 He accounts *Religion*, is the Same, which keeps
 up an eternal Claim to the *Riches*, as well as
 the *Obedience*, of this Nation: The same, which
 hath assured Him, with the assumed Authority
 of God himself, that He not only *may*, but
must; that it is not only *lawful*, but his *Duty*,
 by all the Methods of Dissimulation and Force,
 to extirpate *Heresy* out of our Religion, or Our-
 selves out of the World: The Same, which
 hath taught Him, that Promises, and Profes-
 sions, made to *Hereticks*, in order to the obtain-
 ing his End, are good, and laudable; but,
 after *that* is obtained, become *Sin*, by being
observed: The Same, in one Word, which
 knows no Virtue, but, that which is the Mean-
 est Vice and Disgrace of Human Nature, a
 blind Submission of the Conscience to Man's
 Authority, where Man can have no Authority;
 and which knows no Vice, but, that which is
 the Supreme Virtue and Glory of an Under-
 standing Being, the *standing fast in that Reli-
 gious Liberty*, with which Almighty God,
 both by the Law of Nature, and the Gospel of
Jesus Christ, hath made us Free; that *Freedom
 of Choice*, and Honest Use of our Reason, (the
 neglected Gift of God,) which alone can ren-
 der

S E R M. der the Religion of a Man, acceptable in his
 XI. Eyes.

If the Impressions of this, are so much decayed with Any amongst Us, that They ask, *Where*, or *When*, That Church hath taught Him all this: Let any of its Advocates, answer, and tell us, *Where*, or *When*, that Church ever taught the contrary: Let them name any one Instance, in which the public Authority, or the most celebrated Writers, of that Church, ever disapproved or condemned; or ever did not encourage, and applaud, any Sort of Wickedness for their own Temporal Interest: Let them shew us, where their Leaders inculcate it, as an Indispensable Duty, that *Oaths* taken, and *Promises* solemnly made, to Such as they please to account *Hereticks*, are to be Religiously observed: Let them produce their Authentic Condemnations, and Anathematizations, of Those of their own Church, who have dealt in all the Arts of *Perfidiousness* and *Cruelty*, to enlarge, or recover, Dominion, and Riches. This might justly be expected; if it were just to expect what is impossible.

They themselves know that this is no Imaginary *Satyr*, merely to embellish a Discourse; or to raise the Passions of Men: But that it is too plain to all, who will open their Eyes, and see.

fee. It is writ too deep in Characters of Blood, and Ruine, to be so much as denied even by Themselves, that the Methods, of *Diffimulation*, to inveigle unhappy Men into a Trust and Confidence; of *Perfidiousness*, to cut in sunder the Ties of all Security; of *Barbarities*, and *Inhumanities*, in cold Blood, and upon mature Deliberation, have been all consecrated to Glory; blessed, applauded, and rewarded, by the Public Voice of that Church: Whose true, and legitimate Son, we acknowledge *Him* to be, who now claims our Destruction, as his Right; and comes forth to assert it, Sanctified by the Benedictions, and prepared by the Lessons, of so Holy a Mother; and fired with the Madness of Revenge, made Ten times Hotter by the Fury of such a Religion. This is a short View of that *Scene* of Things, which not only *may*, but *must* come, if the *Cause* now avowed by our Enemies should be crowned with Power and Opportunity.

One would think, indeed, if either the Sense of Feeling, or of Gratitude, were not wholly dead amongst Us, it might be enough to alarm the coldest Breast, to think only upon what the same *Cause* professeth, and attempts, to remove from Us. To deprive Us, of a KING, who is possessed of all the Royal and Humane Virtues, that any Nation could wish to see U-

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nited in a Governour; and possessed of them, in so great a degree, that were his *People* but as willing to be made happy, as *He* is, to make them so, nothing upon Earth could equal the Blessings of his Reign; of a KING, who hath given the World, the sensible and certain Demonstration of Experience, that no Highth of Power can corrupt the Equity of his Nature, or disorder the Temper of His Soul: To deprive Us of such a KING; and with Him, of a PRINCE, whose Noble Passion for the true Interest of this Nation, makes His Name dear to every true *Briton*, and every True *Protestant*: Of a PRINCESS, Whose Private Virtues give Light, and Pleasure to all around Her; and Whose Greatness of Soul taught Her long ago, to disdain the Allurements of *Popery*, tho' clothed in all this World's Majesty, and Glory: And of a *Numerous Race*, to be formed for the support of our Religion, and Liberties, by these Examples: Such a *Scene* of *Good*, in Possession, as Few Nations upon Earth have ever experienced! And such a View of *Good* to come, as calls the *Blessings* of *Future* Times into *our own*; and adds to the Happiness of the Present Generation, a *Taste* of the Happiness of their Posterity! And, what is this, in other Words, but, to deprive Us of every present Good, and every

every future Hope, of *Protestants, Britons*, and *Men* ?

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If we sum it up, therefore, and shew it in one View; the *Cause* now entered into, by our Enemies, is, To remove from Us, a KING whose *Right* is the very Essence, Band, and Fundamental Law, of *Society*; and whose Inclination, Nature, and Religion, all conspire to make Him the Father of his People, delighting in their Happiness, as in his own: And to place in his stead, a *Pretender*, whose Imaginary *Title* is founded upon the very Supposition of our *Ruin*; and Who, if He were possessed of all the Good Qualities with which His Best Friends could wish, at this time, to paint Him out, yet, is Himself possessed by such a *Religion*, as must destroy them all; such a *Religion*, as teacheth Him not to expect either Favour from Those who profess it here, or Mercy from God hereafter, unless He makes the Destruction, both of our *Church* and *State*, the Great Business of his Life, whenever He hath Power in his Hands: Nay, assures Him of the Wrath both of God and Man, should He be so *Wicked*, as ever to think of observing those *Protestations*, or keeping those *Promises*, which are only allowed to delude unwary Men into their own Ruine. This is the Aspect, which it hath upon our selves, at present.

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And then, for the future, It is not only to remove from Us. those *Royal Pledges* of Good to come, which our Eyes now behold ; but it is to banish far out of our Sight, the most distant Prospect of any Protestant Royal Family, for ever ; and to place over Us, a long Chain of Popish Successors, never to be dissolved, or interrupted ; in which the latter Branches may be sure to compleat any Part of our Ruine, in which the Former may have failed. So that it is, in deed, and in truth, to rob Us, and our latest Posterity, of every thing We can Value, in this World ; and, at the same time, of all Thought of ever enjoying it again : And it is, to bring upon Us, and upon all after Us, every Evil that Human Nature ought most to fear, without so much as the faint Glimmering of any *Hope* of Future Redress.

This is the *Cause* now set on foot by our Enemies. And, I am very sure, not aggravated beyond Truth ; because it is a *Cause*, too bad to be capable of Aggravation. No Colours can make it more black, than it is, in it self. No Words can represent it worse, than it represents it self now to the World, supported by the Zeal of *Popery* : whose only Strength lies in the One Comprehensive Principle, of Holy Perfidiousness, and Iniquity ; which tears every Good Principle up by the Roots, and sanctifies
and

and strengthens every bad one. I might have placed before your Eyes, a Scene of those Evils, which the constant Experience of this Nation it self, as well as of All around Us, assures Us, have always accompanied it. But I chose rather to shew it in another Light ; that Such as are deluded with the smooth Words, and fair Promises, of its Advocates, may be convinced, from those Obligations of Religion, and Conscience, which it layeth upon its Disciples, that It not only always was, in fact, so fatal, wherever it hath prevailed ; but *never can be otherwise*. And yet, even with respect to this Cause ; the Worst, in all its Circumstances, that any Nation under Heaven can be witness to ; how astonishing is the Conduct of Many, who call themselves *Protestants*, and perhaps think Themselves so ? Let us now, therefore, consider,

II. The Marks of a *strong Delusion*, in the Behaviour of Those, who join either their *Hands*, or their *Hearts*, or their *Indifference*, to carry on the Work of our Worst Enemies ; whilst they expect to be thought *Protestants*, and *Churchmen*. And,

1. How strong a *Delusion* must be upon the Minds of those Men, who have shewn themselves as ready to swallow all the most ridiculous,

S E R M. and groundless Stories; as the Disciples of *Popery*
 XI. have been to invent, and propagate them?

~~~~~ If one reflects upon what hath passed amongst Us of late, one would be apt to think, that the whole Conduct of the *Machine* for making and distributing *False Reports* to the Credulous People, had been lodged, and entrusted, with the Managers of the *Popish Cause*, in this Kingdom. I forbear to look back farther. It is enough to remember, that *His Majesty* had no sooner taken Quiet Possession of that *Throne*, which God hath given *Him*, but that all the Scandal, and Infamy; every thing that could tend to make *Himself*, and his *Illustrious Family*, contemptible, or hateful, was scattered about, with a Diligence and Zeal almost incredible. No matter how inconsistent; how self-contradictory; how much beyond the common size of Credibility; from that Day to this, it hath been dealt about, with so uninterrupted an Industry, that, I believe, no Age ever was witness to so many, and so extravagant Inventions of Malice, crowded into so short a Period of Time: And every one of them so visibly, and palpably, framed to serve the *Cause of Popery*; and so hugged, and enjoyed, by the *Papists*; (who all the while are laughing at the Credulity of their *Fellow-Labourers*;) that no *Protestants*, of what Church soever, but such

such as are wilfully, or fatally, blind to their own Preservation, could shew that Greediness, which hath been observed, in swallowing, and spreading all the *Fictions* of their *Worst Enemies*; and that resolute Backwardness to believe the contrary, to which even their own Senses might be Witnesses. I have an Eye particularly now, to that Heap of *Mean*, and *Low Calumny*; to that immense Number of the most groveling Falshoods, (not fit to be mentioned) calculated for the *Populace*; some for a Week, some for a Day, or even for an Hour: in order to alienate their Affections from their only true Interest, and to turn their Passions another way.

2. But this alone would not do. The Great Artifice of the *Romanists*, who are ever obliged, in Conscience, to keep our Ruine in their Eye, hath been to give a false Scent to Many *Protestants*, who might otherwise join in opposing their constant Designs; to turn their Jealousies to Shadows of their own raising; and, in order to remove their Thoughts from real Danger, to make them *Fear, where no Fear is*. And, acting this part, with their usual Dexterity, in conjunction with the Fire of Ambition in *Some*, and the Consciousness of Guilt in *Others*; they have had too much Success in it, amongst Those, who seem little to care what becomes

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SERM. becomes of the *Public*, if *Themselves* be not  
 XI. pleased in all things.

I shall mention only *One*, or *Two*, of the most remarkable Instances of this. In order to turn the Jealousies of weak Men, from their own Quarter, upon the *Government* it self, it hath been one Great Piece of their Art, to represent all Attempts in favour of the *Pretender*, as *Chimæras*, and Impossible Imaginations; and, at the same time, to give Assurances to all trusty and faithful Friends, that the Attempt was certain, and too deeply laid, to miscarry. This, they knew, would be of service to Them, two ways. The *One* Part of it would keep up the Hearts, and Spirits, of the Friends of his Cause; and prepare Them for his Assistance: Nay, and increase their Number, and their Insolence. And the *Other*, would be sure to bring *Reproaches* upon any such Preparations of Defense, as would be absolutely necessary to oppose such an Attempt. This was carried farther: even to the charging, or insinuating, Designs of *Arbitrary Power*, to be supported by an Army, here at Home. So that this was the *Hard Lot* of Those who had the Care of the Nation in their Trust. If They made no Provision for our Security, before such an *Attempt* was opened; our Enemies might the better promise Themselves Success. And if they did; the  
 same

same Enemies were sure to Tax them with such Designs, as might Fire the *People* against their *Rightful KING*: the Consequence of which, They well knew, would be, to dispose them the more readily to receive the *Pretender*. But what a *Delusion* must this be? For, as, on the one side, The greatest Enemies of the *KING* cannot name any one thing that looks like so much as a Disposition that way; and, as He hath given *Us*, and all *Europe*, the greatest Proofs, and the greatest Security, of the contrary: So, on the other side, They suffer themselves to be persuaded to throw themselves headlong into the *Arms of Arbitrary Power*, under Pretense of running from it. For this is certain, that, should the *Cause* of the *Pretender* ever succeed, it is so big with the Miseries of *Popery* and *Revenge*, that nothing but *Arbitrary Power* can possibly support it: nor will it ever trust itself here again, under the Influences of *Law*, and *Liberty*.

But the Great, and perhaps the most Prevailing; I am sure, the most Astonishing, *Delusion* of all, is, *That* of those *Protestants*, who Suffer the *Papists* to possess them with an Imaginary Fear about the Security of the *Church of England*; and then, with blinded Eyes, and darkened Understandings, to expect its greater Security, in the *Pretender's Cause*. This, I should think



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think enough to cure any *Protestant* of this Jealousy ; that, from the beginning of that Groundless Cry, it was very observable that the Sons of the *Church* of *Rome*, joined with their loudest Zeal and Noise, in it. For, what a shameless Insult is this upon the Common Sense of Mankind, for *Them* to put on an Air of Concern, and Tenderness, for a *Church*, which they not only Hate, with an implacable Hatred ; but which, it is a Meritorious Part of their Religion, to destroy from the Earth. I would appeal to any of the most deluded *Protestants*, who will but promise to recollect their Thoughts for a Moment, whether the *Papists* joining in spreading this Jealousy of the Danger of a *Church*, which they Hate, be not a certain Proof, that They think it really in a Flourishing Condition ; much too secure for their Designs, and their Interest, unless, by such frightful Fictions, They can entice *Protestants* themselves to join with them, in it's Destruction.

It is fruitless to observe to such *Protestants*, unless They will lay aside their strong Prejudices against their own Interest, that the Worst Enemies of the KING, and the *Administration*, cannot produce one Instance, I will not say, of an Injury, but of any Disregard, to this *Church* ; but might produce many, if they would be so just, of the contrary : As many,

as



as in so short a Time could be possibly given. But if they resolve to swallow all the groundless Jealousies of this sort ; yet, what a degree of Infatuation must it be, to think of *Security*, where there *can* be none ? To fly from the Imaginary Suspicion, to the real Certainty of Ruine ? To run from Those, who, they weakly suspect, *may* ; to Those, who, They know, *must*, destroy it ? Or, Is there any new League of strict Love and Friendship, now made, between the *Church* of *Rome*, and *Us* ? and tied by closer Bonds than *Protestations*, and *Promises*, which it is their Duty to break, as soon as They can ? Or, Is all the Cunning and *Policy* of *Rome* sunk at last into this, of furnishing Money, and Arms ; and of hazarding the Lives, and the Estates, of her true Sons, in this Nation ; out of pure Love and Kindness to the *Church* of *England*, and solely to Establish *That* upon a lasting and strong Foundation ? Or, do Men trust once more to *Vows*, and *Affurances* ? If they do, They trust to what the Experience of this Nation hath felt to be No Security ; and what their Enemies themselves profess to be none. And, do They think that the Number of *Romanists*, who venture their *All* in this World, for the Service of the *Pretender's* Cause, have not had much better *Affurances* and *Security*, that *Their* Interest, and *Their* Religion, is  
to


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to Reign in Triumph in this Land, before they would engage themselves, in so desperate a manner? But, I confess, I should not wonder if *They*, who can come to be so deluded, as to think their *Church* secure, in the Method of *Utter Destruction*, should come to believe that the *British Papists* are inflamed with a Zeal for the *Church of England*; and undergo all the Fatigues, and Hardships, and Dangers, of a *Rebellion*; not to Establish, or serve, *their own Church*, which They love to Death; but the *Church of England*, which they Hate with an immortal Hatred. Even *this* may not be too hard for the Faith of Those, who can trust to any Promises and Vows of Good, or Security, to any *Protestant Church* upon Earth, from such as cannot, and, indeed, dare not, keep them.

3. The same Persons may be *deluded*, if they resolve upon it, by the reproachful Word of *Foreigners*, and Strangers to our Laws; and the like; cast upon our *Royal Family*: without considering, how nearly, and how certainly, They are descended from our *KINGS*; Or, without remembering that *He*, who throws out this Reproach, never had any better Opportunity, Himself, of knowing *Us*, or our *Laws*; Nay, that He hath very particular Reasons to hate, and destroy Them: That He cannot come, with-  
out

out being followed by a Line of *Popish Princes*, S E R M.  
*Foreigners*, in every Sense; and that neither *He*, XI.  
 nor *They*, will come, without a *Religion Fo-*   
*reign* and Superior to all the *Laws* both of God  
 and Man.

4. They may, if they please, be *deluded* by  
 the general Word, of redressing *Grievances*;  
 which yet His *Adherents* themselves mention but  
 very sparingly: because they well know that  
 We have no *Grievances*, in *His* Eye, but the  
 Security of our *Constitution*, in *Church*, and  
*State*; no *Grievances*, for *Him* to ease Us of,  
 but our *Laws*, *Liberties*, and *Religion*. These  
 He sincerely promises Us, to remove. And  
 I truly believe, that His Religion it self will  
 permit Him faithfully to observe such Pro-  
 mises.

But I have said enough. I have shewn you,  
 what that *Cause* is, and how many Evils are  
 contained in it, which is now opened, and  
 avowed, by the Friends of the *Pretender*. I  
 have considered those *Weak Pretences*, and  
*False Insinuations*, by which Many who call  
 Themselves *Protestants*, have been deluded;  
 as they have been managed by the Artifices of  
*Popery*, *Guilt*, and *Resentment*: And, I hope, I  
 have made it appear, that it must be a *Fatal*  
*Delusion* indeed, if They do not see, that to  
 join their *Hands* to the Efforts of our Ene-  
 mies,



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mies, in this *Cause*, is to hasten to the future Ruine of Themselves, and their Posterity, through a Sea of present Calamity ; that to join their *Hearts* and *Wishes*, in it, is to call down every Curse upon Themselves, and all that are to follow them ; and that to put on an *Indifference*, upon this Occasion, is to put it on, in a Cause that doth not admit of an *Indifference*. It is, indeed, to profess an *Indifference* to Life, or Death ; Pleasure, or Pain ; Happiness, or Misery. And tho' *They* may inwardly applaud their own Wisdom, who cautiously wait for the *Event* of things : yet *They* must remember, that their Return to their Senses, from this State of Indifference, will have but an ungraceful Appearance, when All shall be secure ; and that little Thanks will be due to *Them*, (of what sort soever they be,) from their KING or their *Country*, when the Danger shall be over, that *They* have neither opened their Mouths, nor lifted up their Hands, nor so much as their Hearts, against the Enemies, not of *Us*, only, but of all *Human Society*.

If it should be told, in any Part of the Earth where the Histories of our Nation have not been before known ; could it possibly be believed, or could it pass for any thing, but an invented *Satyr* upon Human Nature ; that there is a Sort of Men in the World, uneasy at their  
own



own Happiness: either labouring to tear it in Pieces, Themselves; or, wishing Success to those who are engaged in that Work; or supinely negligent, cold, and indifferent, what becomes of it: Begging a Deliverer, in the Agony of their Distress; and reviling both the Deliverer, and Deliverance, as soon as it is well accomplished: Shaking off Fetters, in one Generation; and calling for them again, in the next: Tiring out Heaven itself, with Petitions for their own Misery; inviting and imploring every Evil upon Themselves, and their Posterity: making loud Professions of the most submissive Passiveness, under the greatest Worldly Hardships; and unable to bear even so small a one, as *the Want of all Power*: Speaking much, and often, and zealously, of the Security, and flourishing Estate, of their *Church*; and, in the same Breath, giving it up into the Guardianship of *Rome*, whose Disciples openly acknowledge themselves bound, in Conscience, to destroy it: Believing the Promises of *Those*, who Themselves assure them, they are not to be believed; Trusting the Pretences of *Those*, whose Religion professeth to destroy at once all the Foundations of Trust; and uniting with *Those*, by whom They are sure to be undone, and miserably treated, themselves: *Some*, striving and fighting; *Some*, wishing and desiring;

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and

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and *Others*, contented, to part with *Ease, Quiet, Laws, Liberty, Property, Religion*, and all the Blessings of Government, administered by Justice and Goodness; And, in their Stead, *Some*, not opposing, and *Others*, contending earnestly, for *Chains, Banishments, Massacres, Slavery*; and for every Evil, contained in the Two Great Comprehensive Engines of Misery, Unchristian *Persecution* in Church, and Lawless *Tyranny* in State: And, in order to all this, *Some*, taking a Pleasure, and *Others*, satisfied and easy, to see their Native Country laid Waste, and made a Scene of Blood, and Confusion; and the Seat of a *Civil War*, which, in its lowest degree, must unavoidably bring along with it many unhappy Instances of Devastation, and Mourning; which God, the Righteous Judge, will charge to *Their* Account, who neither will know their own Happiness, nor can bear with that of *Others*: In a word, *Some* openly attempting to destroy, and *Others* not attempting to defend, a *Government*, upon which the Happiness of their own Lives, as well as of their Neighbours and Posterity, intirely depends; and an Administration, which Themselves do not charge with any one Instance of *Illegal* or *Arbitrary* Proceeding.

If it be possible to cast a Veil over the Shame of our Country; let not this Scene of Blindness, Absur-

Absurdity, Contradiction, and Inconsistency, make a Part of its History. But if this cannot be hid; let it be told, at the same time, with how steady a Greatness of Soul, and how calm a Constancy of Mind, the KING received the Insults, and Ungrateful Returns of Men, whom He came disposed to make happy: Like a Rock, unmoved by those Waves that dash themselves to Pieces against it. Let it be told; with how ready, and sincere, a Zeal, his *Parliament* hastened to vote every thing for *His*, and the *Public* Security; with how faithful, and vigilant a Care, His *Ministers* detected the secret Contrivances, and opposed the *Open* Designs, of His Enemies: Nor let it be forgot, that, in the midst of all the *Madness* of *Some*, supported, and increased, by the *Indifference* of *Others*, there were Multitudes of *Good Subjects*, truly sensible of the Invaluable Blessings They enjoyed in *Him*, and His Administration; full of Gratitude to Heaven for their Happiness; and ready to hazard all the Concerns of this World, in the Defense of it.

May the Number of such, daily be seen to increase! As it must do, if all *Common Sense* be not lost from the Earth: And, may *We*, from the Principles of Conscience, and Honour, be, of that Number! As *We* must be, if *We* consider what either *Conscience*, or *Honour*, mean.



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Let us be just to This *Day*, which once was blessed by every *Protestant* Mouth in this Nation, for the present Relief and Respite from impending Ruine, which it then brought along with it: And which ought now much more to be blessed, as it hath laid the Foundation of Happiness, not only for Us, but the Children yet unborn; as We have seen, and now feel, the Great End aimed at by it, to be crowned with Success; and the Mercies that it first conveyed to Us, (even every thing We enjoy in *Church*, and *State*, and the very Possibility of enjoying it,) secured against every human Attempt, but our own *Stupidity*, and *Ingratitude*, by the Settlement of that *Protestant Succession*, which alone could give Us any Prospect of Good.

May Almighty God, the Great Governour of all Things, watch, in a particular Manner, with the Eye of his Providence, over those *Sacred Lives*, upon which All Our Happiness is suspended! And guard them against every Attempt of Secret, or Open, Violence!

May He direct All, to whom the *Administration* of Affairs is committed, to go on, with Wisdom, Courage, Unanimity, and Constancy, to consult, and secure, the Public Interest! And whether the Influences of it reach to our particular Concerns, any farther, than as They are mixed

mixed with the *Public*; Whether We taste of its Beneficence, any otherwise, than as Members of the Whole; or not; let us always call to mind that it is our Duty, not to measure our Obligations to Thankfulness, by any *private* Considerations, distinct from the *Common Good*; but to rejoice, with as much Sincerity and Zeal, for the inestimable Blessing of *Public Security*, in which *All* partake, as God, and Justice, and Reason, require, from a *People*, the most happy in the whole World, if They would but know their own Happiness! Which, God grant They may, *before it be hid from their Eyes!*

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*The Restoration made a Blessing to Us, by the  
Protestant Succession.*

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## S E R M O N XII.

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Preached before the KING, at the Royal-Chapel  
at *St. James's*, May 29, 1716, being the  
Anniversary of the RESTORATION.

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P S A L M CXXVI. 3.

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*The Lord hath done great Things for Us; where-  
of we are glad.*

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S E R M.  
XII.



**I**N all great *Revolutions* of *States* and *King-*  
*doms*, which We are called upon to com-  
memorate in a Publick Manner, We must  
consider what Concern we ourselves have in the  
lasting Effects or Consequences of them; and  
what ought to be the real Ground of our Joy  
upon such Occasions. If we feel no kindly  
Influences from them upon our own Affairs;  
it will be impossible to warm ourselves into any  
Disposition of Mind that can be called *Thank-*  
*fulness*: Which must always be founded upon  
Something,



Something, in which We ourselves have a Part. They will be only like other *Historical Matters of Fact*; Something to amuse and entertain Us; serving to please our Curiosity, but not to raise our Gratitude. And if We feel the Sentiments of Joy and Thankfulness, rising in our Breasts, from such Principles and Motives, as no true *Christian, Protestant, or Briton*, ought to entertain: Our Joy then becomes the Same with the Joy of our *Worst Enemies*; and the Expressions of it no better than the Tokens, either of our Blindness, or of our Corruption.

In *this Nation* particularly, it is certain, that, in all Affairs which concern our *Constitution*, either in *Church or State*, nothing can be more absurd, than for the *Friends* of both, and the *Enemies* of both, to have the Same Movements and Passions upon the Same Occasions. It is impossible for a *Protestant*, if He knows what that Word means, to raise his Joy upon the same Foundation with a *Papist*. It is impossible for a Lover of his Religion, and his Country, to rejoice with Those who firmly believe it to be their Duty to rejoice in nothing more, than in the Ruine of both.

As our Joy, therefore, could not possibly discover itself upon *this Day*, if the Providence of God had *done great Things*, not for *Us*, but for our *Forefathers* alone; and had permitted *Them*



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to stop the *Blessing* from descending, or to convey down a *Curse* instead of it: And as Our Joy cannot, in the Nature of Things, be the Joy of our *Enemies*; because it must be raised upon Something of *Our own* Happiness, which They have hitherto always made inconsistent with *Theirs*: Let Us now proceed upon this Foundation, and consider,

The *Great Things* God hath done for Us, in that whole *Scene* of *Providence*, which *this Day* opened.

This will naturally fix our Minds, in a more particular Manner, upon the *Blessings*, in which We are immediately concerned.

And this will unavoidably lead Us to some Thoughts, of Importance to the present and future Interest of the Nation.

Now the whole *Scene* of *Providence*, which *This Day* opened, and which, taken in one View, can alone be said to make *this Day* a Blessing to Us, is indeed a *Scene* full of a long Train of Incidents, and a vast Variety of Circumstances, enough to make both *Prince* and *People*, in this Nation, for ever Wise and Happy.

The first Part of it, is a *King* restored to his *Kingdom*; with his *Brother* in view to Succeed Him:



Him : but this, not till, on one hand, *He* had seen, both by Example, and Experience, how terrible in its Effects, the popular Dread of *Arbitrary Power* could shew itself, when ever it was set on Fire; and not till, on the other Hand, his *People* had sufficiently felt, how great an Evil the Want of their *Legal Government* was.

One would think here was a plain *Middle Way of Wisdom and Happiness*, pointed out even by *Sense* itself. But there was another, and a very different Turn given to this Affair, by the indefatigable Workings, and Artifices, of our Enemies. An universal Madness of *Loyalty* (falsly so called,) as well as of *Manners*, presently took place : And the *People* came pressing in Throngs, beseeching to be accounted Slaves, rather than Subjects; and begging, in Words, for Opportunities of *unlimited Submission*, as if they were begging for *Acts of Grace and Favour*. The View in *Those*, who then had the Direction of their Passions, was to keep that Spirit up to a Pitch, till a *Popish Heir* was secure of the Throne. Nor could all the Knowledge of the Nature and Principles of *Popery*; nor the avowed Contradiction of it to the Religion and Liberties of their Country, engage the Hearts of many ; or divert them from the Resolution of trusting the whole Concerns of a  
*Protestant*

SERM. *Protestant Nation*, in the Hands of a *Popish*  
 XII. *Prince* : who at length took Possession of the  
 ~~~~~ *Throne*, to which He was thus called.

Nor had he enjoyed the Power long, before He obliged His Friends with frequent Trials of the Sincerity of their Professions. For, as it appears, He had so much better an Opinion of their Integrity, than his *Predecessor* had, that He really thought them in earnest ; and resolved to hazard all, with a Dependence upon the Honesty of their Solemn Promises of *Unbounded Submission*. This, indeed, proved fatal to *Himself* in the Event : But, in all human Appearance, was much more likely to have proved fatal to the whole Nation.

If We stop a little here, and consider this Unhappy *Prince*, possessed of all the Power our *Laws* could vest in Him, and flattered with a Power above all Laws ; and armed, in all human Appearance, with a sufficient Force to put his Resolutions in Execution ; We may ask any *Protestant* in the *Nation*, if He will but put himself into that Posture of Mind, in which every one felt himself at that Season, What was *then* become of the *Blessing* of this *Day* ? And, what would it now have availed Us, that our *Forefathers* saw their *Legal Constitution* restored to them, and rejoiced to see it ; if the very *Restoration* of it had proved, in
 the

the Issue, the Ruine and Destruction of all the
Legal Rights of their *Posterity*?

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But the Grand Design of Providence extended much farther. There is a *Principal* Part of it yet behind: And this was, to make it a lasting Blessing. And the Way was laid for this, in a Method, if you consider it in itself, the most easy and natural; as *Providence* always loves to work by human Means: if you consider it in that great Variety and Vicissitude of Circumstances attending it, the most instructive and useful to a *Nation*: And if you consider it with regard to the many Probabilities that seemed to weigh against the Success of it, little less than miraculous. When it was fixed by *Providence* to bring about the *Restoration* of the *Royal Family*, and the *Legal Constitution* of this *Kingdom*; and to continue it a *Blessing* to the Generations to come; it was necessary, in order to this, to make such a Disposition of Affairs, as might be suitable, and adapted, to the Accomplishment of it. But first, the *Nation* was to feel many and various Trials; many Vicissitudes of Hope, and Fear; many Conflicts between the Attempts of *Popery*, and *Slavery*, on the one hand, and the Strugglings of *true Religion* and *Liberty*, on the other; before so great a Work could be concluded. And then, at length, the Embarrassments of Human

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man Madness were to be disentangled, and all the Plots and Efforts of Cunning and Power, united, in order to intail a Curse upon all Posterity, where God designed a Blessing, were to be dissipated, and scattered into Air.

With a View to this, a *Prince* was born Some Years before the *Restoration*, that He might be ripe, both in Age, and Abilities, for the performing the great Design, just when those Attempts should be ripening into Execution: And was afterwards, by a kind Disposition of Providence, to make the Way the easier, married into the Same *Royal Family*, from which He descended. And, accordingly, when the Scene of Ruine was opened so plainly, that no Eye was *then* too blind to see it, He appeared in all the Maturity of Wisdom, and Vigor of Action: A Prince, inured to Labours and Hardships from his Birth; prepared for the great Work, by his personal Accomplishments; directed to it, by his Descent, and his Marriage; and qualified for it by his Interest and Authority *Without*, as well as by an Uncommon Greatness of Soul *Within*. Such a peculiar Conjunction of every thing desirable in the Person to undertake a Work, hazardous enough, one would imagine, to deter the Greatest Minds from thinking of it; and such a Disposition of the various Interests of the *States* and *Kingdoms* of

of *Europe*, as both required and supported the Undertaking; must appear very surprizing, in so critical a Moment of Time: When, if we speak within the compass of Human Views, nothing but so unparalleled a *Combination of Circumstances* could have afforded even the least hopes of Success.

The *Event* of this was happy beyond Expression? And the *Madness* of *Popery* and *Arbitrary Rule*, was stopped in the Vigour and Warmth of all its Power and Hopes. But even yet, something farther was wanting; and *That* was, to fix the *Succession* to the *Crown*, in such a Manner, as the *Experience* of *Feeling*, and *Common Sense* in *Judging*, of necessity directed the Nation to do. This *Day* must have been marked with something very different from a *Blessing*, if the *Revolution* had stopped where it began; and, after a little present Respite, had delivered the Nation back again, into *Popish* Hands. And where indeed should We now search for the *Blessing* of the *Restoration*; if We did not see it, and feel it, in the *Blessing* of the *Protestant Succession*?

This was the Great View of Heaven, in its first Design. And, therefore, We see with Pleasure, that when it was resolved by Providence to make *this Day* memorable, by the *Restoration* of the *Royal Family*, and our *Legal Constitution*,

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tion, it was resolved by the same good Providence, that, in the very same *Year*, upon the very *Day* before this Great Work was to be accomplished, a *Prince* should be born, in Whom that *Restoration*, should in due Time centre, and to whom alone it should be reserved to compleat the *Blessing* for *Us*, and to transmit it down secure, to our Posterity, in his own *Illustrious House*.

This, I say, is the *whole Scene* of Providence which *this Day* opened; and which, taken in one View, can alone be said to make it a *Blessing* to *Us*, or to our Children after *Us*. If you view the *Restoration*, without the *Revolution*, and the *Protestant Succession*; it leads you directly to a *Popish Prince*, holding an Arbitrary Hand over all your Liberties: tearing up the Fences of all your Laws; fixing all *Right* in his own Will and Power; and persecuting all his Subjects into the Exercise of his own, Superstitious, Idolatrous, and Cruel Religion. And this is the whole of the *Blessing*, in which you would see it end at last. A Blessing, which may be a fit Reward for the *Slavish Bigotry* of *Papists*! But for *Protestants* — fit only for *Those* of them who deserve it. And *They* deserve it, who choose it; whom no Experience, no Consideration, no Miracles of Providence, can

can engage to prefer their own Happiness before their own Destruction. SERM.
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But if We view the same *Restoration*, in another Light, as the *Restoration* of our *Legal Constitution*, secured by the late *Revolution*, and fixed by the *Settlement* of the Crown in the *Protestant Line*; it appears a Blessing to Us indeed, by leading Us to the *Happiness* which We ourselves at present see, and feel; but cannot describe.

We have now, therefore, by an easy and natural Train of *Facts*, brought down our Thoughts to the present Times, in which our Eyes behold the *Grand Design* of *this Day*, brought to Maturity; and Plenty of Happiness held forth to Us, if we have any Sense or Notion left of what Happiness means, by the *Protestant Succession* now taking place. A Blessing recommended to Us, by the immense Difficulties cast in its Way, before it could be settled by a *Law*; and the various Hazards of losing it, since it was so! And a *Blessing*, which, unlike the other Blessings of this World, fully answers, in the Enjoyment, all the Expectations which it raised in the *Prospect*.

If it be the greatest Happiness that can be tasted in Human Society, to be governed by *Laws*; We feel our selves, and all our Concerns, under the Influence of a *Legal Government*.

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ment. If it be certain, that *Those Princes* are best qualified to govern well by *Written Laws*, who have governed well without them; this is a peculiar Part of our Happiness, to have the Execution of our Laws, and the Preservation of our Rights, vested in a *Prince*, who never betrayed, even when his Will was his *Law*, the least Inclination towards any Designs, but what are the Dictates of the strictest Justice.¹ And if it redoubles a Blessing, to foresee it flourishing amongst our *Posterity* in future Ages; let this be acknowledged a great Addition to our present Happiness, that We may promise it to our Children after Us, under the Influences of *Those* who are to succeed Him.

This is such a *System*, such a *Collection* of *Blessings*, as ought, in Justice, to be viewed with the most passionate Sentiments of Joy and Thanksgiving. A *King* upon the Throne, formed for the Happiness of All, who live under the Shadow of his Authority: By his experienced Virtues, entitled to the *Love* and *Affection* of his *Subjects*; and by the *Laws* of their Country, (built upon the Fundamental Laws of Human Society) entitled to their Allegiance: Great in *Himself*, if the Perfection of Justice, and Honour, and Equity, be true Greatness; and Great in his *Illustrious Family*, if the Prospect of transmitting Blessings to Posterity, by
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a Line of Princes descending from Himself, makes up any Part of Greatness: And, in a peculiar Manner, Great in his Influences upon the present State of this Nation, as He stands possessed of an unshaken Steadiness of Soul, not to be moved from his People's Interest; and of a Firmness of Mind, incapable of the Impressions, either of Fear, or of Inconstancy. Without which Noble and Happy Accomplishments in the *First Possessor* in that *Illustrious House*, which the Providence of God hath now fixed upon the Throne, it may justly be feared, that this Happy Settlement might by this Time have been Shaken, and the Blessings of the *Protestant Religion*, and our *Legal Liberty* (for which We have been so many Years contending,) might once more have been in danger of vanishing from our Sight.

And even still, the Suspicion of So much Happiness Ceasing in Time to come, might be very uneasy to Us, if We did not see, in his *Royal Heir*, and *Successor*, a Noble and Generous Zeal, avowed with all the Tokens of the most Sincere and Upright Heart, for the same invaluable Goods.

Nor will I ever omit, when I am recounting the Instances of our Publick Happiness, to mention that *Race of Princes* to come: From *Whom*, what is it that We may not expect?

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When We not only think of the Examples of Good Government they will have Seen; but consider them now under the Eye and Direction of a *Princess*, in whom the Perfection of Good Sense, and the Perfection of Good Nature, are united; and outdone by nothing, unless by that Sacred Regard to *True Religion*, which will make her Story the Delight of Good Men in Ages to come.

This is the Fabrick of Happiness in which our Souls may take their Rest. How much *less* than this, might We our Selves have been well contented to hope for: And indeed, What *more* than this, could any Nation under Heaven well wish for? And yet, Against this whole *Scheme of Blessings*; against their own, and their Neighbours Security; against their own *Laws* and *Liberties*; against the Establishment of every thing valuable in this World; We have seen a *Rebellion* raised, by the Wicked Perverseness of Men without the Pretense of a Provocation, besides the single Provocation of offering them Happiness, in a Way, and by the Hands, which They were not pleased to like: And this, before their Passions had any thing offered to them, to set them on Fire. And We have Seen an *Administration* reviled, and insulted, by Those, who themselves had tasted nothing but Good from it.

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When one reflects with Coolness upon what hath lately past amongst Us, it seems as if the Fullness of Happiness had itself set on fire the restless Malice of Those, who were resolved not to acknowledge or enjoy the Blessing offered them; and that the Rage of Enmity hath been forced to be raised the higher, and the louder, by all the Management of Artifice because there was so little to Complain of.

But this is the Glory of an *Administration*; when Those who most revile it, cannot do it without bearing Testimony to it themselves. It is the Glory of an *Administration*, when the Reproaches, with which it is to be loaded, are cast into *Future Times*; when the bitterest Enemies it hath, are forced to call in the Help of the most fruitful Invention; and, for want of present Grievances, to fill the Minds of Men with the Suspicions of Evils to come. It is the Glory of an *Administration*, when, before it can be blackened, and made vile, the Names, and Natures, and Boundaries of Things, must be altered and removed: *Light* put for *Darkness*, and *Darkness* for *Light*; *Legal Justice* (though mixed with more Temper, than ever yet was seen, in any Nation, upon a like Occasion,) treated with the Indignity, due only to the *Height of Injustice*; the most necessary *Self-defence* reviled as *Cruelty*; and a *False Compassion* placed

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in the Seat of Mercy; the *Safety* of a whole Nation, and all its Concerns, weighed in the Balance against *Trifles*; and even *Popery* itself painted with *Truth*, and *Meekness*, and *Love*, in its Face, as an harmless agreeable Thing, worthy to be received with the open Arms of Friendship, by Those, it would devour.

When these are the Methods of attacking an *Administration*, it is a very happy Sign, that They who make use of them, have occasion heartily to wish it much worse than They find it; and a very strong Argument to all Good Subjects, to wish as heartily that their Country may never know the want of an *Administration*, which is not reviled by its *Greatest Enemies*, unless it be in such a Manner, as to add to its Reputation and Honour.

What is it, that an Uneasy, Thankless, Generation of Men would have? Blessed be God, the Publick Efforts of their Malice are once more dissipated. They are conquered in the Field. But their *Spirits*, and their *Tempers*, and their *Designs*, do not at all appear to be conquered: If We may judge from their Indefatigable Diligence and Art, in filling the Heads of their Well-wishers, as Soon as *one* Desperate Attempt is over, with Hints and Expectations of *Another*; and from the Unparalleled Insolence of their Agents and Followers,

even

even whilst they are begging and waiting for Mercy.

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It may be very hard, to find present and effectual Remedies for so great Evils. But this *One* thing, I am sure, is very plain, and very proper to be mentioned, that, in order entirely and successfully to conquer such *Enemies*, We must first conquer *Ourselves*.—Did all, who truly wish well to the present Establishment, unanimously pursue the Same *good Ends*, there would be no ground for Fear. But whilst the Passions of Well-meaning Men, upon every Trifling and Private Occasion, join themselves with the *Designs* of Those, who certainly mean our Ruine; it is *this* that swells the Current; and that feeds the Insolence and Expectation of the Common Enemy.

But to conclude: If a long Series of Experience can make any Nation wise, *We*, of all Nations in the World, have that Advantage. We are not only made happy; but made happy in those Methods, which cannot but teach Us to value our Happiness, whilst, That which *Others* learn by Reflexion and Judgment, *We* have had brought home to Us, by the Sense of *Feeling*, and *Eye-Sight*. The Enemies of our Happiness themselves, ought to learn Conviction, from All that this Nation hath been Witness to; and to become Friends. And for

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Those, who are truly *Friends*, in the main and essential Points of our Happiness; certainly ~~it~~ is Time for all them to think it Wisdom, to give up even their private Schemes and No-tions, as well as their private Resentments and Views, to the Publick Good; and, at length, after so many Vicissitudes of Hope and Fear, so many Struggles between Life and Death, so many Hazards and Dangers escaped, to unite in strengthening, instead of weakening, the Hands of *Those*, who have it in their Will, as well as in their Trust, to establish Us upon a Foundation never more to be shaken: That so, the *Best of Kings* may have the *Best of Sub-*jects; and, Authority and Law, Obedience and Liberty, may be seen united, in all their Vi-
gour and Glory; and descend down, with the Blessings which accompany them, to all Fu-
ture Generations. *Which God grant, for the Sake of Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord!*

The Nature and Duty of a Public Spirit.

SERMON XIII.

Preached at St. James's, Westminster, on St. David's Day, March 1, 1716. before the Honourable the Stewards and Others of the Society of *Antient Britons*, established in Honour of Her Royal Highness's Birth-day, and the *Principality of Wales*.

PHIL. ii. 4.

Look not every Man on his own Things : But every Man also on the Things of Others.

THERE are hardly any Words, more common in the Mouths of Men, than a *Public Spirit*; a *Regard to the Public*; the *Good of the Public*; the *Love of our Country*; and many others of the like Sort: Which are indeed, in their Original Design, but different Expressions for One and the Same Thing. The Great Point is, what these

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Words ought truly to signify; what Temper and Disposition of Mind; what Practice and Conduct of Life, They ought to represent and design. And, as I think that the great End of such *Societies* and *Assemblies*, as the present, is to cultivate that Good Spirit of Love and Humanity, which may diffuse itself thro' the whole Tenor of Men's Actions; I have, upon this Account, thought it proper to choose these Words of St. Paul: In which He condemns that *Vicious Selfishness* which teacheth Us to confine our Views to *Ourselves* alone, considered as separated from the Rest of the World; and, at the same Time, directs Us to the contrary good Temper and Disposition, of a Diffusive Regard to All Mankind around Us. And I choose Them, as They will give Us Occasion to consider, in a more general Way, than perhaps *He* at that Time directly intended, and with a particular View to *Human Society*, The true *Foundation*, *Nature*, and *Extent*, of a *Public Spirit*; the *Bad Disposition*, and *Vice*, opposite to it; the *Effects* in which *It* will shew itself; and the *Motives* there are, to the cherishing and improving it in *Ourselves*.

1. The *Foundation* of it is laid in that Virtuous *Love* of *Ourselves*, which is joined with the *Love* of *Others*, united with Us in *Human Society*:



Society: And it must be supported by that great and god-like Disposition of Mind, which desires and labours to plant Happiness, where it is not; and to continue it where it is. And this is the same Thing with that Comprehensive *Love* and *Charity* towards *Others*, which the *Gospel* came to restore, and to inflame. But this, I say, not so as to exclude that reasonable Regard to ourselves, and our own Concerns, which never is, nor can be, a *Vice*. So far from it, that, as long as We are Members of *Human Society*, nothing can more secure and improve our own Happiness, than this Regard to the Happiness of that *Human Society*, of which we are Members. We can do nothing for that good End, but what will reflect back its happy Influences upon ourselves, in some Degree or other: As Every *Law* for the Preservation, and Glory, and Happiness, of the *Public*, is a *Law*, in which All the Members of the *Public* must find their own Account, and their own Security. So that a *Public Spirit* is not founded upon a *Regard* to *Others*, inconsistent with a *Regard* to *Ourselves* in a good Sense; but really takes in that virtuous and praise-worthy *Self-love*; which considers our own True Lasting Interest, (as well as the Peace and Applauses of our Mind within,) closely united with

S E R M. with the Happiness and Interest of All around
XIII. Us.

~ This may appear with more Light, if you consider the very Method, and End, of Mankind's *Engagements* with one another, in their entering into the *Terms* of *Human Society*. Before you suppose this *Engagement*, or Compact, or whatever you will call it, Every Man was, properly speaking, *One* by *Himself*; guarding *Himself* alone, against *Others*; taking every thing for his Support, which could come within his Reach; and having *Himself* alone, under his own Care and Protection. The first Step towards *Human Society* must arise, in the Nature of the thing, from a Desire of a more settled Security, than Every Man, by *Himself*, could find in his own Defense and Protection; joined with a Benevolent Desire of the same Good to *Others*, which Every One found the want of, in *Himself*. And the Nature of the *Stipulation*, or *Agreement*, must have been this; not, to profess or pretend to throw off All Concern for *Themselves*; or to regard the Happiness of *Others*, in a way inconsistent with their own: But to engage for that mutual Strength and Support, which should be the Happiness of All the Members of Society; that is, of *Themselves*, as well as of *Others*.

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The *Public Spirit*, therefore, We are now speaking of, as it respects *Human Society*, must be founded upon the Original Design, and End, of *Human Society*; which was, in the Intent of every Man, the Good and Happiness of *Himself*, considered in Conjunction with the Good and Happiness of *Others*.

2. This will lead Us to the True Account of the opposite *Vice*. For it is plain from what hath been said, that this doth not consist in regarding *Ourselves*; provided we regard *Ourselves* as Members of *Society*, united in the Bonds of Friendship and Union with many *Others*, for the same End of Mutual Preservation and Happiness; But that the *Crime* consists in regarding *Ourselves* in such a manner, as doth in effect take us out again of that *Society*, into which We were entered; and shews that we consider *Ourselves*, as retired back again into that *State*, in which We were originally Our own Supports, and Our own Defenders, without Regard to Any but Our selves. This, Every one sees plainly, in the Case of Notorious Offenders; in Instances which public Infamy and constant Punishment have marked with Disgrace; such as Open Robbery, and Violence, and Rapine. But it is as true, and as certain, in all other, less observed, and less notorious, Instances. For, as Men professing those Vices, have,

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have, for their own present Humour, or Passion, voluntarily removed Themselves out of that *Society*, in which They were once engaged: So, Whoever, out of a false regard to Themselves; either for a present Gratification of Covetousness, Pride, Ambition, Revenge, or the like, hinder the least Good, or procure the least Evil, to the *Public*; *These Men* are, in that Instance, and in that Degree, upon the ^asame foot with the *Others*. They are so far got loose from the Bonds of Human Society. They so far regard *Themselves* as Particulars, standing by *Themselves*. They have so far torn themselves from the Ties and Concerns of Social Engagements. And, tho' they may avoid the Infamy of *Common Discourse*, which generally follows nothing but *Public and Shameful Punishment*; yet, in reality They are but just where the *Others* are; that is, They are again got back into a *State* directly opposite to that of *Human Society*; and are divested of All Real Title to the *Advantages* of a Condition, from which They have voluntarily separated Themselves.

The *Question* therefore, to any Man upon this Subject, is only this, Whether, upon any Occasion, He will regard *Himself*, and his own immediate Passions and Views, (which He supposeth His present Good,) in Distinction and Opposition to the Good of *Society*;

or, Whether He will be content to regard *Himself*, as a Member of *Society*; and his own particular Good and Happiness, as united and consistent with the *Good* and *Happiness* of Others. In the former Case, His Choice immediately dissolves the Relation between *Him* and *Others*, and gives Them a Right to look upon, and treat Him, as a *Public Enemy*. In the latter Case, His Choice is directed by a Benevolent Temper to *Himself*, as well as to *Others*; and by a Desire of the Happiness of *Others*, as united with his own, in the same Great Concerns.

3. It follows naturally, upon what hath been said, to observe, that it is this Desire of the Happiness of *Others*, this Generous and Diffusive Love of Mankind, which, in all Seasons, and upon all Occasions, will be our chief Defense against falling into the *Vice*, I have been now speaking of. For tho', at the Beginning, the first Thought of entering into the *Terms* of *Society*, was owing to the Wants, and Defects, which Every particular Man found in *Himself*, for his own particular Support and Preservation; yet the *End* of that *Society* must be answered, and maintained, by that Equitable Rule, of not expecting from Others, what We ourselves are not ready to afford Them, in all like Circumstances. And,
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in order to afford Them, what We think reasonable to expect from Them, We must feel, and improve, in our selves, the Love and Desire of the Happiness of the World about Us; and fix it as a steady Principle of our own Conduct, that it is not only strictly agreeable to the very *Engagements* of *Human Society*, in which We are entered; but that it is highly glorious, and honourable, to add to the Happiness, and to diminish the Miseries, of Others, as far as our Power and Influence can extend Themselves.

The Great Necessity, and Usefulness, of having such a Support, laid deep in a Well-disposed Mind, will appear to Any, who will give Themselves the Trouble of remarking the many Powerful, and too often Successful, Enemies there are, to this Good and Benevolent Spirit. Sometimes Covetousness, and sometimes Pride; sometimes the Ambition and Thirst of Power, and sometimes the Revenge and Rage of Disappointment, will overturn the Minds of Men, on a sudden; and make them forget, that They are entered into Society with their Neighbours: Unless They have firmly fixed it in their own Judgments, that it can never be *dishonourable* for them to promote the *Happiness* of *Others*; nor ever be *honourable* for Them, in any Degree, to take
Them-

Themselves back again to *Themselves*, after SERM.
 They have once entered into All the *En-* XIII.
gagements of *Human Society*. And this can
 never be firmly fixed in any Mind, in which
 that *Vicious Selfishness* reigns, which banishes
 All Disposition towards making others happy;
 and plants in its room a cold Neglect of All
 the Rest of Mankind. Many a One, who
 would start at the Thought of being an open
Robber, or *Cut-throat*, yet is sometimes found
 to indulge Himself, out of some poor private
 View, or Resentment, in acting a Part,
 which puts Him as much out of *Society*; and
 is, in it's Effects, perhaps of more fatal Conse-
 quence to the Happiness of Mankind, than
 Thousands of Robberies, and Private Violences.
 The same *Law of Equity*, Condemns the *One*,
 which Condemns the *Other*. The same Reasons
 engage Us against the *One*, which engage Us
 against the *Other*. The same End of *Society*,
 and the same Desire of the *Happiness* of *Others*,
 rightly considered, and thoroughly imbibed,
 would effectually prevent or cure them both.
 And in Cases, where no public Temporal Pu-
 nishment follows, nothing but a *Good Principle*
 within, can be of any lasting good Consequence.

4. As for the *Effects*, that will be seen to
 flow from hence; a *Public Spirit*, or the
Love of Our Country, or whatever it may be
 called,

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called, will not shew itself, as if it were the Love of a particular *Climate*, or *Soil*; or of a particular *Constitution* of *Government*, whatever it be, merely because we happen to be born under it: But it will appear in All the Genuine Effects of a sincere Desire of the Happiness of *Society*, and of *Ourselves*, considered as Members of *Society*. It will answer those *Ends* and *Engagements* of *Human Society*, upon which it is built; and produce All the *Fruits* of that Love of Mankind, which We can never forbear to extol and applaud wherever We meet with it. It will Act with a View to Our own Happiness, considered as tempered in such a manner with that of Others, as that We can never destroy our own Lasting Interest, whilst We promote the Common Interest, in which Our own lives and breathes. It is Something as far removed from Noise and Passion in *Words*; as it is from Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, or Revenge, in *Actions*. It doth not always, indeed, sooth and flatter our present Passion, or Every Immediate View of Personal Profit, or Power; but it always tends to secure, even our Private Good, which We have, by entering into Society, mixt with the Good of Others. In a word, It is seen in a Constant Regard to the Interest of that *Society*, from which *Our own* cannot

cannot be separated: And consists, not in a Neglect of *Ourselves*; but in a Regard to *Others*, closely united, in the same Common Happiness, or Common Misery, with *Ourselves*.

5. I come now to the *Motives* and *Inducements* to this Disposition, and Practice. And, as I have hitherto considered a *Public Spirit*, with regard to *Human Society*; so, the first Motive naturally ariseth from hence, that the *Ends* and *Engagements* of *Human Society* make *This* the Duty of every Man, who is not willing to appear false to his *Honour*, and to his *Assurances*. There is no need of any Explicit Formal *Contract* in this Case. For, whoever thinks, He hath Reason to expect the *Privileges*, the *Protection*, the *Support*, arising from *Society*, (which, I believe, Few will think they have forfeited,) doth, by that very Thought, effectually give, or renew, the necessary *Assurances*, on his own Part. He acknowledges Himself bound by all the Ties of that *Society*; and consequently obliged, in Honour and Conscience, to regard *Himself*, not as a Person by *Himself*, with his own private Passions and Humours only to gratify, but as *One* of a Number of Men, whose Happiness and Interest is one and the same. Whenever, therefore, He separates his own Good, from that of the *Whole*, into which he

S E R M. professeth voluntarily to throw it, every Hour
 XIII. that He lives under the Benefit and Protection
 of *Social Laws* ; He sins against Those useful *Obligations* ; with much more Dishonour, and many more fatal Consequences, than a Man who breaks his private *Agreement*, or revokes his *Verbal Promise*, or his *written Bond*. It is in vain indeed, that Men are entered into the *Ties of Society*, unless They look upon that very Entrance into them, as a strict Obligation upon them, to Act agreeably to those *Ties*.

So that, if You only consider yourselves as *Members of Human Society*, You have the strongest Motive, which Honour, and Reason, and Equity, can suggest ; that is, the *Motive* taken from the Bonds, and Engagements, You have brought yourselves under ; to perform, on your Part, what in Reason you may expect from *Others* in the same Circumstances ; and what is agreeable and answerable to the Privileges and Protection You think yourselves entitled to, from the *Body Politic*. To claim the Benefits of *Laws*, and the Supports arising from *Human Society*, is absolutely unreasonable and absurd, for any One to presume to do, who hath any Sense of Virtue and Honour left ; unless He be ready, on his own Part, to pay back again all the Reciprocal

cal Duties respecting the Good of the Whole: Which He doth, in Effect, Promise and Vow to do, whenever He expects those Benefits. The first Motive therefore is this. You are entered into the Engagements of *Human Society*. You are obliged in Conscience and Honour to answer those Engagements. And consequently, are obliged to regard the Happiness of that *Society*, in which your own is concerned; and your own private Inclinations, or Passions, no farther, than as they are consistent, not only with the Security, but with the Happiness, of the *Public*.

If from hence we proceed to consider Our selves as *Reasonable Creatures*, brought into Being by the Great Father of all Things; and capable of finding out his Existence, Nature, and Perfections; We shall be persuaded, that We can never be so Great in Ourselves, as when We conform Ourselves to his Will, or imitate his Perfections. And, when we know that He loves to communicate Happiness; and that His great Glory is, Mercy, and Goodness, diffused to all Beings, who do not make Themselves incapable of them: This will be a powerful *Motive* to all *who know his Name*, to esteem it as their own great Glory and Honour, to resemble Him, in that Good and Benevolent Disposition, to which They them-

SERM. selves owe All that they enjoy, and all that
XIII. They can hope for.



If we now consider Ourselves as *Christians*, We shall find that the *Best Religion* is founded in *Love*; and that this *Love* is not a *Passion*, or a *Fancy*, or an *Enthusiasm*, of the Mind, but the *Beneficence* of Practice; that it consists, not in *Profession*, and *Words*, but in *Deed*, and *Action*; that it hath no other Signification, in the Law of *Christians*, but *doing Good*, that is, adding to the Happiness, or diminishing the Miseries, of *Others*. This is that *true Friendship*, with regard to particular Persons, which alone deserves that Name; and this is that true *Public Spirit*, with regard to the *whole Society* to which We belong, which comprehends and enlivens every Duty we owe to it. If we have *Christian Charity*, We have that *Beneficent Temper* which promotes the *Good* of *Others*; and the more Diffusive and Extensive this is, the more *Christian* it is: And if We feel nothing of the Desire of the Happiness of Others, in Us, We are certainly void of All that *Love*, which is the Foundation, and Essence, of the Gospel.

The last thing I shall mention, is, *Self-Love*, and *Self-Interest*, rightly understood. For I am persuaded that, if *this* be wholly left out of the *Question*; and All regard to *Themselves* be excluded,

excluded, so that Men shall find that they are neither to reap *Profit*, nor *Pleasure*, nor *Honour*, nor any *Advantage*, from the Part they are to act, it is invain to enter into Argument with Them. Their Practice must be determined another way ; and the *Passions* of their Hearts will easily hurry Them, withersoever They please. And here, if Men have any native Goodness and Probity of Mind, They will feel within Themselves the *Pleasure* and *Honour* of keeping strictly to those *Engagements*, which the Nature of *Human Society* layeth upon them ; and for which alone They receive the Supports and Protection of it. They will have the Reward within of a peaceful Breast, undisturbed with the Tumults of Passion, Pride, Covetousness, or Revenge. They will feel that it is, truly speaking, much more happy to *Themselves*, to give Bounds to their own Desires and Views, in Conjunction with the *Ends of Society*; than to break through their own Obligations, to ruffle and discompose their own Breasts, merely for the sake of laying hold on every Opportunity of adding, for the present Moment, either to their *Riches*, or their *Power*.

The Difference is this, that They will not indeed have the Satisfaction of gratifying every present *Humour*, or *Inclination*, or *Rage* ;

SERM. (if *that* can be called a *Satisfaction*, which of-
 XIII. ten brings so much Private, as well as Public,
 ~~~~~ Evil along with it:) but They will have the  
 Satisfaction, even as to *Themselves*, of pursu-  
 ing their present Interest in a more steady and  
 secure, as well as a more honourable way;  
 and at the same Time of continuing down  
 those Goods to their own *Posterity*, which  
 They enjoy themselves. Whereas every  
 Breach or Violence, made upon the *Scheme*  
 of *Public Good*, hath appeared, in Multitudes  
 of Instances, to have ended even in the Tem-  
 poral Disadvantage, or Ruine, of the Persons  
 Themselves who have been tempted to join in  
 it. So it may *probably* be always, because  
 in its Nature it tends to it: But it will *certainly*  
 affect many hereafter, in whom They ought  
 to think Themselves nearly and deeply con-  
 cerned.

If, therefore, Men have any Regard to in-  
 ward Peace and Tranquillity; if They have  
 any Sense of Contentment within, or Security  
 without; if They will consult their Under-  
 standing, and not their *Passion*, about their  
*Interest*; if They are not lost to all Sense of  
 the Good of their own *Posterity*; if They  
 have not thrown off all Regard to their *Rea-  
 son*, as well as all *Belief* in *God*; They will  
 think even their present Interest, (as well as  
 their

their Future Reward,) sufficiently consulted S E R M.  
and secured, by such a Temper of Mind, as XIII.  
will teach Them to disdain to accept of the  
*Benefits of Society*, without adding to the Hap-  
piness of it ; and to pursue their own present  
Good, always in Conjunction with *that* of the  
*Public*, to which They belong.

I must not make an End, without saying something upon the present Occasion of our meeting together. This *Society* hath many *Circumstances* of Advantage above Others of the like Nature, not only as it comprehends, in its Intent, a very great Number of the most Antient and Noble *Families* of this *Island* ; but as it flourishes under a most *Illustrious* and *Royal President* ; as it was first instituted to the Honour of a *Princess*, whose Name carries every happy Influence along with it ; as it is expressly founded upon a Principle of Affection, as well as Duty, to that *Royal Family*, in which We are now so happy above all the Nations around us ; and as it is peculiarly designed to diffuse and propagate that *Public Spirit*, or Love to our *Country*, which is inseparably the same with *Their* Interest. If You consider Yourself in this View, You will from hence receive new Supplies of *Zeal*, and fresh *Motives* to every thing, You owe to *Yourself*, *Your Fellow-Subjects*, and *Your Posterity*.



SERM. When *this Day* leads your Thoughts from  
 XIII. a *Dead Saint*, whose Virtues You ought to celebrate, as far as the *History* of so remote and dark an *Age* will permit, to that *Living Example* of Virtue, whose Birth gives it its present Lustre and Brightness; to a *Saint*, not dressed up in the Pageantry of a blind Superstition; but adorned with those real and substantial Graces, the Practice of which You can see with Admiration, and the Effect of which the World feels with Happiness: When *this Day* directs your Thoughts in this Manner, the Honour You pay to *Her* is paid to *Virtue*; And the Pleasure you perceive, in paying it, ariseth from a Regard to the *Public*; when You are carried by the same Thought to view *Posterity*, made happy, perhaps in many Countries, by *Those*, whose Minds and Manners She is now forming to every Thing Great, and Beneficent; as well as to remark the Influences of Wisdom and Goodness upon the present Generation.

When You consider *Yourself*, as under the *Presidency* of His ROYAL HIGHNESS, *His Zeal* for the Good of *Great Britain*, will animate and inflame your own. In the Calm of Prosperity, He will always praise and extol your Love of your Laws and of your Country. In the Times of Hazard  
 and


and Distress, if any such should come, *He* will lead You on to Glory by his Example. And if You follow Him through the Paths of Honour and Courage, You will make *Your selves*, and your *Posterity*, as happy as He wishes You to be ; and that is, as happy as You can wish yourselves to be.

Your Thoughts will now naturally lead you to that truly Great and Good KING, whom the particular Providence of *God* hath placed, and preserved, upon the Throne of these *Kingdoms*. If You consider *Him* in His Disposition, His Temper, His Resolutions ; how much Encouragement will You find in all these, to your improving and inflaming a true *Public Spiritedness* in Yourselves ? And how much need of it will you discover, if you reflect upon that *Scene* of Behaviour towards Him, to which our own Eyes have been, and are Witnesses ? *He* came to Us, clothed with all the Circumstances that could recommend Him, even to our Passionate Love. *Power* and *Authority* He had enjoyed, in its Supreme Highth, long before, in his own Country. But He always chose to Reign, not by His *Power*, but by His *Goodness* : And They who lived under his Influences, loved Him too well, to be sensible They obeyed Him. His Beneficence made every Part of  
their

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SERM. XIII.  their Behaviour, result from *Affection*, rather than *Duty*. And yet, tho' this was His known and experienced Conduct: and tho' He came hither disposed to cherish *Our* Happiness, as *His own*; and to establish this Nation, by Justice, and Temper, and Wisdom: We have seen Those amongst Ourselves, who have been ready to prefer the *Certain Enemies* of their *Religion* and *Liberties*, before the *Greatest Friend* Those invaluable Goods ever yet could boast of. They have been willing to call in the Bigotry and Revenge of *Poper*y; And, when that alone hath failed, even to invite in a Deluge of relentless Destruction, and Desolation, in order to get rid of a State of Happiness, which they are conscious They do not deserve, and have shewn themselves not able to bear.

But let not the *Zeal* of some, to tear in Pieces that *Scheme* of *Blessings* which Heaven hath put into our Hands, exceed our *Zeal* to stop its passage from Us, and to secure it to Ourselves and all Posterity. As We have a *Prince* upon the *Throne*, who, unlike most of the *Princes* of this *World*, desires nothing of Us, but to make ourselves happy; as We have all the Inducements that *Men*, and *Christians*, and *Protestants*, can have; as We have all the Terrors, and Evils, that the strongest

strongest Imagination can invent, to fear for our Country, if the Cause of Religion and Liberty should be overturned and oppressed ; as We are ourselves, in our own Persons, deeply concerned in all the miserable Consequences of such an Event ; and are under all the Obligations of Honour, and Conscience, to promote the Happiness of the *Public*, of which We are Members ; and as We must expect to answer to God, as well as to our own Consciences, for our Stupidity and Madnes, in neglecting so great and invaluable Good Things : Let Us not permit the Zeal of a true *Public Spirit* to cool in our Breasts ; let us not only improve it in Ourselves, but let us kindle and increase it in *Others* ; till it may come to be too powerful for that *Narrow, Vicious, Selfishness*, which is the Root of all *Public Evil* ; and settle Us at last upon the unmoveable Foundation of *Peace and Happiness*.

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*The Nature of the Kingdom, or Church of*  
CHRIST.

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S E R M O N XIV.

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Preached before the KING, at the Royal Chapel  
at St. James's, on Sunday, March 31, 1717.

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St. JOHN xviii. 36.

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*Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this  
World.*

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ONE of those great Effects, which Length  
of Time is seen to bring along with it,  
is the Alteration of the Meaning annex-  
ed to certain Sounds. The Signification of a  
Word, well known and understood by Those  
who first made use of it, is very insensibly va-  
ried, by passing through many Mouths, and  
by being taken and given by Multitudes, in  
common Discourse; till it often comes to stand  
for a Complication of Notions, as distant from  
the original Intention of it, nay, as contradicto-  
ry to it, as Darkness is to Light. The Igno-  
rance and Weakness of Some, and the Passions  
and Bad Designs of Others, are the great In-  
struments

struments of this Evil: which, even when it seems to affect only indifferent Matters, ought in reason to be opposed, as it tends, in it's Nature, to confound Men's Notions in weightier Points; but, when it hath once invaded the most Sacred and Important Subjects, ought, in Duty, to be resisted with a more open and undisguised Zeal, as what toucheth the very Vitals of all that is Good, and is just going to take from Men's Eyes the Boundaries of Right and Wrong.

The only Cure for this *Evil*, in Cases of so great Concern, is to have recourse to the Originals of Things, to the Law of Reason, in those Points which can be traced back thither; and to the Declarations of *Jesus Christ*, and his immediate Followers, in such Matters as took their Rise solely from those Declarations. For the Case is plainly this, that Words and Sounds have had such an Effect, (not upon the Nature of Things, which is unmoveable, but) upon the Minds of Men in thinking of them; that the very same Word remaining, (which at first truly represented One certain Thing,) by having Multitudes of new inconsistent Ideas, in every Age, and every Year, added to it, becomes itself the greatest Hindrance to the true understanding of the Nature of the Thing first intended by it.

For

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For Instance, *Religion*, in St. *James's Days*, was Virtue and Integrity, as to Ourselves, and Charity and Beneficence to Others; before *God*, even the *Father*, *Jam. i. 27*. By Degrees, it is come to signify, in most of the Countries throughout the whole World, the Performance of every thing almost, except Virtue and Charity; and particularly, a punctual Exactness in a Regard to particular *Times, Places, Forms, and Modes*, diversified according to the various Humours of Men; recommended and practised under the avowed Name of *External Religion: Two Words*, which, in the Sense fixed upon them by many *Christians*, *God hath put asunder*; and which, therefore, *no Man should join together*. And accordingly, the Notion of a *Religious Man* differs in every Country, just as much as *Times, Places, Ceremonies, Imaginary Austerities*, and all other *Outward Circumstances*, are different and various: Whereas in truth, though a Man, truly *Religious* in other Respects, may make use of such Things; yet they cannot be the least Part of his *Religion*, properly so called, any more than his Food, or his Raiment, or any other Circumstance of his Life.

Thus, likewise, the *Worship of God*, to be paid by *Christians*, was, in *our Saviour's Time*, and in his own plain Words, the *Worship of*  
the

the Father *in Spirit and Truth*; and this declared to be one great End proposed in the *Christian Dispensation*: *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him*; John iv. 23. But the *Notion* of it is become quite another thing: and in many *Christian Countries*, that which still retains the Name of the *Worship of God*, is indeed the Neglect, and the Diminution of the Father; and the Worship of other Beings besides, and more than, the *Father*. And this, performed in such a manner, as that any *indifferent Spectator* would conclude, that neither the Consciences nor Understandings of Men, neither *Spirit* nor *Truth*, were at all concerned in the Matter; or rather, that they had been banished from it by an express Command. In the mean time the *Word*, or *Sound*, still remains the same in Discourse. The whole Lump of indigested, and inconsistent Notions and Practises; Every thing that is solemnly said, or done, when the *Worship of God* is professed, is equally covered under that *general Name*; and, by the help of using the same *Original Word*, passeth easily for the thing itself. Again,

*Prayer*, in all our *Lord's* Directions about it, and particularly in that *Form*, which He him-

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S E R M. himself taught his Followers, was a calm, undisturbed, *Address to God*, under the Notion of a *Father*, expressing those Sentiments and Wishes before Him, which every sincere Mind ought to have. But the same *Word*, by the help of Men, and voluminous Rules of Art, is come to signify *Heat and Flame*, in such a manner, and to such a degree, that a Man may be in the *best Disposition* in the World, and yet not be *devout* enough to *Pray*: and many an honest Person hath been perplexed, by this Means, with Doubts and Fears of being uncapable of *Praying*, for want of an *Intenseness of Heat*; which hath no more relation to the Duty, than a Man's being in a *Fever* hath, to the Sincerity of his Professions, or *Addresses to any Earthly Prince*.

Once more; the *Love of God*, and of *our Saviour*, was at first, in his own Words, and those of St. *John*, many Times repeated, the *keeping his Commandments, or doing his Will*. John xiv. 15, 21, 23. Ch. xv. 10. 1 John ii. 5. Ch. v. 3. 2 John 6. But the *Notion* of it was, it seems, left very jejune; and so hath been improved by his *later Followers*, till the same *Name*, still kept up in the Language of *Christians*, is far removed from the *Thing* principally and first intended; and is come by degrees to signify a violent *Passion, Commotion, and Ecstasy*,

*Passy*, venting it self in such sort of Expressions and Disorders, as other *Passions* do: and this regulated and defined, by such a Variety of Imaginations, that an ordinary *Christian*, with the utmost Sincerity in his Heart, is filled with nothing but eternal Suspicions, Doubts, and Perplexities, whether he hath any Thing of the true *Love of God*, or not.

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I have mentioned these *Particulars*, not only to shew the Evil it self; and to how great a Degree the *Nature* of Things hath suffered, in the Opinions of Men, by the Alteration of the Sense of the same *Words* and *Sounds*: but to give you Occasion to observe, that there can be no Cure for it, in *Christians*, but to go back to the *New Testament* it self; because *There* alone we shall find the Original Intention of such Words; or the Nature of the Things designed to be signified by them, declared and fixed by our *Lord*, or his *Apostles* from him, by some such Marks, as may, if we will attend to them, guide and guard us in our Notions of those Matters, in which we are most of all concerned.

It is with this View, that I have chosen those *Words*, in which our *Lord* himself declared the Nature of *his own Kingdom*. This *Kingdom of Christ*, is the same with the *Church of Christ*. And the *Notion of the Church of*  
U *Christ,*

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*Christ*, which, at first, was only the Number, small or great, of Those who believed *Him* to be the *Messiah*; or of Those who subjected themselves to *Him*, as their *King*, in the Affair of *Religion*; having since that Time been so diversified by the various *Alterations* it hath undergone, that it is almost impossible so much as to number up the many *inconsistent Images* that have come, by daily Additions, to be united together in it: Nothing, I think, can be more useful, than to consider the same thing, under some other *Image*, which hath not been so much used; nor consequently so much defaced. And since the *Image* of *His Kingdom*, is *That*, under which our Lord himself chose to represent it: We may be sure that, if we sincerely examine our Notion of his *Church*, by what He saith of his *Kingdom*, that *it is not of this World*, we shall exclude out of it, every thing that he would have excluded; and then, what remains will be true, pure, and uncorrupted. And what I have to say, in order to this, will be comprehended under Two *General Heads*.

I. As the *Church* of *Christ* is the *Kingdom* of *Christ*, *He* himself is *King*: and in this it is implied, that *He* is himself the sole *Law-giver* to his *Subjects*, and himself the sole *Judge* of their *Behaviour*, in the Affairs of *Conscience* and

*Eter-*

*Eternal Salvation.* And in this Sense, there-fore, *His Kingdom is not of this World* ; that He hath, in those Points, left behind Him, no visible, human *Authority*, no *Vicegerents* who can be said properly to supply his Place; no *Interpreters*, upon whom his Subjects are absolutely to depend; no *Judges* over the Consciences or Religion of his People. For if this were so, that any such absolute *Vicegerent Authority*, either for the making *New Laws*, or interpreting *Old* ones, or *judging* his *Subjects*, in *Religious* Matters, were lodged in any Men upon Earth; the Consequence would be, that what still retains the Name of the *Church of Christ*, would not be the *Kingdom of Christ*, but the *Kingdom* of those Men, vested with such *Authority*. For, whoever hath such an *Authority* of making *Laws*, is so far a *King* : and whoever can add new *Laws* to those of *Christ*, equally obligatory, is as truly a *King*, as *Christ* himself is; Nay, whoever hath an *absolute Authority* to *interpret* any written, or spoken *Laws*; it is *He*, who is truly the *Law-giver*, to all Intents and Purposes; and not the Person who first wrote, or spake them.

In human Society, the *Interpretation* of *Laws*, may, of necessity, be lodged, in some Cases, in the Hands of Those who were not originally the *Legislators*. But this is not ab-



SERM. *solute*; nor of bad Consequence to *Society*:  
 XIV. because the *Legislators* can resume the *Interpre-*  
 tation into their own Hands, as They are Wit-  
 nesses to what passes in the World; and as  
 They can, and will, sensibly interpose in all  
 those Cases, in which their Interposition be-  
 comes necessary. And therefore, They are  
 still properly the *Legislators*. But it is other-  
 wise in *Religion*, or the Kingdom of *Christ*.  
 He himself never interposeth, since his first  
 Promulgation of his *Law*, either to convey  
*Infallibility* to Such as pretend to handle it over  
 again; or to assert the true *Interpretation* of it,  
 amidst the various and contradictory Opinions  
 of Men about it. If *He* did certainly thus in-  
 terpose, He himself would still be the *Legisla-*  
*tor*. But, as *He* doth not; if such an absolute  
*Authority* be once lodged with Men, under the  
 Notion of *Interpreters*, *They* then become the  
*Legislators*, and not *Christ*; and *They* rule in  
 their own *Kingdom*, and not in *His*.

It is the same thing, as to Rewards and Pu-  
 nishments, to carry forward the great End of  
 his *Kingdom*. If any Men upon Earth have a  
*Right* to add to the *Sanctions* of his *Laws*; that  
 is, to increase the Number, or alter the Na-  
 ture, of the *Rewards* and *Punishments*, of his  
 Subjects, in Matters of Conscience or Salvati-  
 on: They are so far *Kings* in his stead; and  
 Reign

Reign in *their own* Kingdom, and not in *His*. So it is, whenever They erect *Tribunals*, and exercise a *Judgment* over the Consciences of Men; and assume to Themselves the Determination of such Points, as cannot be determined, but by *One* who knows the Hearts; or, when They make any of their own Declarations, or Decisions, to concern and affect the State of *Christ's* Subjects, with regard to the Favour of God: this is so far, the taking *Christ's Kingdom* out of *His* Hands, and placing it in their own.

Nor is this Matter at all made better by their declaring Themselves to be *Vicegerents*, or *Law-makers*, or *Judges*, under *Christ*, in order to carry on the Ends of his Kingdom. For it comes to this at last, since it doth not seem fit to *Christ* himself to interpose so as to prevent or remedy all their Mistakes and Contradictions; that, if They have this Power of interpreting, or adding Laws; and Judging Men; in such a Sense, that *Christians* shall be indispensably and absolutely obliged to obey those *Laws*, and to submit to those *Decisions*; I say, if They have this power lodged with them, then the *Kingdom*, in which they rule, is not the *Kingdom* of *Christ*, but of *Themselves*; *He* doth not rule in it, but *They*: And whether They happen to agree with Him, or to differ from Him,

S E R M. as long as They are the *Law-givers*, and *Judges*, without any Interposition from *Christ*, either  
 XIV. to guide or correct their *Decisions*, They are *Kings* of his *Kingdom*, and not *Christ Jesus*.

If therefore, the *Church* of *Christ* be the *Kingdom* of *Christ*; it is essential to it, that *Christ* himself be the Sole *Law-giver*, and Sole *Judge* of his Subjects, in all Points relating to the Favour or Displeasure of *Almighty God*; and that All His *Subjects*, in what Station soever they may be, are equally *Subjects* to Him; and that No One of them, any more than Another, hath *Authority*, either to make *New Laws* for *Christ's* Subjects; or to impose a Sense upon the *Old Ones*, which is the same thing; or to *Judge*, Censure, or Punish, the Servants of *Another Master*, in Matters relating purely to *Conscience*, or *Salvation*. If any Person hath any other Notion, either thro' a long Use of Words with Inconsistent Meanings, or thro' a Negligence of Thought; let him but ask himself, whether the *Church* of *Christ* be the *Kingdom* of *Christ*, or not? And, if it be, whether this Notion of it doth not absolutely exclude all other *Legislators* and *Judges*, in Matters relating to *Conscience*, or the Favour of *God*; or, whether it can be *His Kingdom*, if any Mortal Men have such a Power of *Legislation* and *Judgment* in it. This Enquiry will

will bring Us back to the first, which is the only True, Account of the Church of Christ, or the Kingdom of Christ, in the Mouth of a Christian; That it is the Number of Men, whether Small or Great, whether Dispersed or United, who truly and sincerely are Subjects to Jesus Christ alone as their Law-giver and Judge, in Matters relating to the Favour of God, and their Eternal Salvation.

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II. The next principal Point is, that, if the Church be the Kingdom of Christ; and this Kingdom be not of this World: this must appear from the Nature and End of the Laws of Christ; and of those Rewards and Punishments, which are the Sanctions of his Laws. Now his Laws are Declarations, relating to the Favour of God in another State after this. They are Declarations of those Conditions to be performed, in this World, on our Part, without which God will not make us Happy in that to come. And they are almost All general Appeals to the Will of that God; to his Nature, known by the Common Reason of Mankind; and to the Imitation of that Nature, which must be our Perfection. The keeping his Commandments is declared the Way to Life; and the doing his Will, the Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. The being Subjects to Christ, is to this very End, that We may the



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better and more effectually perform the *Will* of God. The *Laws* of this *Kingdom*, therefore, as *Christ* left them, have nothing of *this* World in their View ; no Tendency, either to the Exaltation of *Some*, in worldly Pomp and Dignity ; or to their absolute Dominion over the Faith and Religious Conduct of *Others* of his Subjects ; or to the erecting of any Sort of *Temporal Kingdom*, under the Covert and Name of a *Spiritual* one.

The *Sanctions* of *Christ's Law* are *Rewards* and *Punishments*. But of what sort ? Not the Rewards of this World ; not the Offices, or Glories of this State ; not the Pains of *Prisons*, *Banishments*, *Fines*, or any lesser and more moderate *Penalties* ; nay, not the much lesser *Negative Discouragements* that belong to *Human Society*. He was far from thinking that *These* could be the Instruments of such a *Persuasion*, as He thought acceptable to God. But, as the Great End of his *Kingdom*, was to guide Men to Happiness after the short Images of it were over here below ; so, He took his *Motives* from that place, where his *Kingdom* first began, and where it was at last to end ; from those *Rewards* and *Punishments* in a future State, which had no relation to this World : And, to shew that his *Kingdom* was not of this World, all the *Sanctions* which he thought fit to give to *His Laws*, were not of this World at all.

St.



St. Paul understood this so well, that He gives an Account of His own Conduct, and that of Others in the same Station, in these Words, *Knowing the Terror of the Lord, we persuade Men* : whereas, in too many *Christian Countries*, since his Days, if Some, who profess to succeed Him, were to give an Account of their own Conduct, it must be in a quite contrary Strain ; *Knowing the Terrors of this World, and having them in our Power, We do, not persuade Men, but force their outward Profession against their inward Persuasion.*

Now, wherever *this* is practised ; whether in a great degree, or a small ; in *that* Place there is so far a Change, from a *Kingdom* which is *not of this World*, to a *Kingdom* which is *of this World*. As soon as ever you hear of any of the *Engines* of *this World*, whether of the greater, or the lesser sort, you must immediately think that then, and so far, the *Kingdom of this World* takes place. For, if the very Essence of God's Worship be Spirit and Truth ; If *Religion* be *Virtue* and *Charity*, under the *Belief* of a Supreme Governour and Judge ; if True Real *Faith* cannot be the Effect of *Force* ; and, if there can be no *Reward* where there is no *Willing Choice* : then, in all, or any of these Cases, to apply Force or Flattery, Worldly Pleasure or Pain ; is to act contrary to the Interests of  
True

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True Religion, as it is plainly opposite to the Maxims upon which *Christ* founded his Kingdom ; who chose the *Motives* which are *not of this World*, to support a *Kingdom* which is *not of this World*. And indeed, it is too visible to be hid, that wherever the *Rewards* and *Punishments* are changed, from Future to Present, from the World to come, to the World now in Possession ; there, the *Kingdom* founded by our *Saviour* is, in the Nature of it, so far changed, that it is become, in such a degree, what He professed, *His Kingdom was not : that is, of this World* ; of the same sort with other Common *Earthly* Kingdoms, in which the *Rewards* are, *Worldly Honours*, *Posts*, *Offices*, *Pomp*, *Attendance*, *Dominion* ; and the *Punishments* are, *Prisons*, *Fines*, *Banishments*, *Gallies*, and *Racks* ; or something Less, of the same sort.

If *these* can be the true Supports of a *Kingdom* which is *not of this World* ; then Sincerity, and Hypocrisy ; Religion, and No Religion ; Force, and Persuasion ; A Willing Choice, and a Terrified Heart ; are become the same Things : Truth and Falshod stand in need of the same Methods, to propagate and support them ; and our *Saviour* himself was little acquainted with the *Right* way of increasing the Number of such *Subjects*, as He wished for.

for. If He had but at first enlightened the Powers of *this World*, as He did *St. Paul*; and employed the *Sword* which They bore, and the *Favours* They had in their hands, to bring *Subjects* into his *Kingdom*; this had been an Expeditious and an Effectual Way, according to the Conduct of some of his professed Followers, to have had a Glorious and Extensive *Kingdom*; or *Church*. But this was not his Design; unless it could be compassed in quite a different way.

And therefore, when You see *Our Lord*, in *His* Methods, so far removed from Those of Many of his Disciples; when You read Nothing, in his Doctrine about his own *Kingdom*, of taking in the Concerns of this World, and mixing them with those of Eternity; no Commands, that the Frowns and Discouragements of this present State should in any Case attend upon Conscience and Religion; no Rules against the Enquiry of All His Subjects into his *Original Message* from Heaven; no Orders for the kind and charitable Force of *Penalties*, or *Capital Punishments*, to make Men think and choose aright; no Calling upon the *secular Arm*, whenever the *Magistrate* should become *Christian*, to inforce his Doctrines, or to back his *Spiritual Authority*; but, on the contrary, as plain a Declaration as a few Words can make, that



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that *His Kingdom is not of this World*: I say when You see this, from the whole Tenor of the *Gospel*, so vastly opposite to many who take his Name into their Mouths, the Questions with you ought to be, Whether He did not know the Nature of his own *Kingdom*, or *Church*, better than Any since his Time; whether you can suppose, *He* left any such Matters to be decided against *Himself*, and his own express Professions; and, whether, if an *Angel from Heaven* should give you any Account of his *Kingdom*, contrary to what He himself hath done, it can be of any Weight, or Authority, with *Christians*.

I have now made some such Observations, drawn from the *Church* being the *Kingdom* of *Christ*, and not of any Men in that *Kingdom*; from the *Nature* of his *Laws*, and from those *Rewards* and *Punishments*, which are the Sanctions of those *Laws*; as lead us naturally into the true *Notion* of the *Church*, or *Kingdom*, of *Christ*, by excluding out of it every thing inconsistent with *His* being *King*, *Lawgiver*, and *Judge*; as well as with the *Nature* of his *Laws*, and of his *Promises* and *Threatnings*. I will only make *Two* or *Three* Observations, grounded upon this; and so conclude. And,

1. From what hath been said it is very plain in general, that the Grosest Mistakes in Judgment,

ment, about the Nature of *Christ's Kingdom*, or *Church*, have arisen from hence, That Men have argued from Other Visible Societies, and Other Visible Kingdoms of this World, to what ought to be Visible and Sensible, in *His Kingdom*: Constantly leaving out of their Notion, the most Essential Part of it, that *Christ* is King in his own Kingdom; forgetting this King himself, because He is not now seen by mortal Eyes; and substituting Others in his Place, as *Law-givers* and *Judges*, in the same Points, in which He must either Alone, or not at all, be *Law-giver* and *Judge*: not contented with such a Kingdom as He established, and desires to reign in; but urging and contending that *His Kingdom* must be like *Other Kingdoms*. Whereas He hath positively warned them against any such Arguings, by assuring Them that this Kingdom is *His Kingdom*, and that it is not of this World; and therefore that No one of His Subjects is *Law-giver* and *Judge* over Others of them, in Matters relating to Salvation, but He alone; and that We must not frame our Ideas, from the Kingdoms of this World, of what ought to be, in a visible and sensible Manner, in *His Kingdom*.

2. From what hath been said it appears, that the Kingdom of Christ, which is the Church of Christ, is the Number of Persons who are Sincerely,

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cerely, and Willingly, *Subjects* to *Him*, as *Law-giver* and *Judge*, in all Matters truly relating to Conscience, or Eternal Salvation. And the more close and immediate this Regard to *Him* is, the more certainly and the more evidently true it is, that They are of his *Kingdom*. This may appear fully to their own Satisfaction, if They have recourse to *Him* himself, in the *Gospel*; if They think it a sufficient Authority, that He hath declared the *Conditions* of their *Salvation*, and that no Man upon Earth hath any Authority to declare any other, or to add one Tittle to them; if They resolve to perform what they see, He layeth a Stress upon; and if They trust no Mortal, with the absolute Direction of their *Consciences*, the Pardon of their Sins, or the determining of their Interest in God's Favour; but wait for their *Judge*, who alone can bring to Light the *bidden things of Darknes*.

If They feel themselves disposed and resolved to receive the Words of *Eternal Life* from *Himself*; to take their *Faith* from what He himself *once delivered*, who knew better than All the rest of the World what He required of his own *Subjects*; to direct their *Worship* by his Rule, and their whole Practice by the General Law which He laid down: if They feel themselves in this Disposition, They may be

very certain, that They are truly his *Subjects*, and Members of his *Kingdom*. Nor need they envy the Happiness of *Others*, who may think it a much more evident Mark of their belonging to the *Kingdom of Christ*, that They have *other* Law-givers, and Judges, in *Christ's Religion*, besides *Jesus Christ*; that They have recourse, not to *his own* Words, but the Words of *Others* who profess to interpret them; that They are ready to Submit to this *Interpretation*, let it be what it will; that They have set up to Themselves the *Idol* of an unintelligible *Authority*, both in *Belief*, and *Worship*, and *Practice*; in Words, *under* Jesus Christ, but in Deed and in Truth *over* Him; as it removes the Minds of his *Subjects* from himself, to Weak, and Passionate Men; and as it claims the same Rule and Power in *his Kingdom*, which He himself *alone* can have. But,

3. This will be *Another Observation*, That it evidently destroys the *Rule* and *Authority* of *Jesus Christ*, as *King*, to set up any Other *Authority* in *His Kingdom*, to which His Subjects are indispensably and absolutely obliged to Submit their Consciences, or their Conduct, in what is properly called Religion. There are *some* Professed *Christians*, who contend openly for such an *Authority*, as indispensably obliges All around Them to *Unity* of Profession;

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SERM. fion; that is, to Profess even what They do  
XIV. not, what They cannot, believe to be true.

~ This sounds so grossly, that *Others*, who think they act a glorious Part in opposing such an Enormity, are very willing, for their own sakes, to retain such an *Authority* as shall oblige Men, whatever They themselves think, though not to profess what They do not believe, yet, to forbear the *Profession* and *Publication* of what They do believe, let them believe it of never so great Importance.

Both these *Pretensions* are founded upon the mistaken *Notion* of the *Peace*, as well as *Authority* of the *Kingdom*, that is, the *Church*, of *Christ*. Which of them is the most insupportable to an honest and a Christian Mind, I am not able to say: because They both equally found the *Authority* of the *Church* of *Christ*, upon the Ruines of Sincerity and Common Honesty; and mistake *Stupidity* and *Sleep*, for *Peace*; because They would both equally have prevented *All Reformation* where it hath been, and will for ever prevent it where it is not already; and in a word, because both equally divest *Jesus Christ* of his *Empire* in his own *Kingdom*; set the Obedience of his *Subjects* loose from *Himself*; and teach them to prostitute their *Consciences* at the Feet of *Others*, who have no Right in such a manner to trample upon them.

The

The *Peace of Christ's Kingdom* is a manly and Reasonable *Peace* ; built upon Charity, and Love, and mutual Forbearance, and receiving one another, as God receives us. As for any other *Peace* ; founded upon a Submission of our *Honesty*, as well as our *Understandings* ; it is falsely so called. It is not the *Peace of the Kingdom of Christ* ; but the *Lethargy* of it : and a *Sleep unto Death*, when his *Subjects* throw off their relation to *Him* ; fix their Subjection to *Others* ; and even in Cases, where They have a Right to see, and where They have a Power to see, his Will, as it really is, shall shut their Eyes, and go blindfold at the Command of *Others* ; because those *Others* are pleased to make themselves the Sole Judges of the Will of their great Lord and Master.

To conclude ; The *Church of Christ* is the *Kingdom of Christ*. He is *King* in his own Kingdom. He is sole *Law-giver* to his Subjects, and Sole *Judge*, in Matters relating to Salvation. His *Laws* and *Sanctions* are plainly fixed : and relate to the Favour of God ; and not at all to the Rewards, or Penalties, of *this World*. All his Subjects are *equally* his Subjects ; and, as such, *equally* without Authority to alter, to add to, or to *interpret*, his *Laws* so, as to claim the absolute Submission of *Others* to such *Interpretation*. And

SERM. All are *His Subjects*, and in his Kingdom, who  
 XIV. are ruled and governed by *Him*. Their *Faith*  
 was *once* delivered by *Him*. The Conditions  
 of their Happiness were *once* laid down by *Him*.  
 The Nature of *God's Worship* was *once* declar-  
 ed by *Him*. And it is easy to judge, whether  
 of the Two is most becoming a *Subject* of the  
*Kingdom of Christ*, that is, a *Member* of his  
*Church*; to seek all these Particulars in those  
 plain and short Declarations of their *King* and  
*Law-giver* himself: or to hunt after Them,  
 thro' the infinite Contradictions, the number-  
 less Perplexities, the endless Disputes; of *Weak*  
*Men*, in several Ages, till the Enquirer himself  
 is lost in the Labyrinth; and perhaps sits down  
 in Despair, or Infidelity. If *Christ* be our  
*King*; let us shew ourselves *Subjects* to *Him*  
 alone, in the great Affair of Conscience and E-  
 ternal Salvation: and, without Fear of Man's  
 Judgment, live and act as becomes Those who  
 wait for the Appearance of an All-knowing and  
 Impartial Judge; even *that King*, whose *King-*  
*dom is not of this World*.

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# S E R M O N X V.

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Preached at the Funeral of Mrs. *Elizabeth Howland*, in the Parish-Church of *Streatham* in *Surry*, on *Friday, May 1, 1719.*

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R E V E L A T I O N S xiv. 13.

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*I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that They may rest from their Labours ; and their Works do follow them.*

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**T**H E R E is nothing in which the S E R M.  
Weakness of Mankind is more betray- xv.  
ed, than in the Notions commonly re-  
ceived in the World, about Happiness and Un-  
happiness. We all profess ourselves engaged  
in the Pursuit of the one, and the avoiding  
the other ; and Consequently very much con-  
cerned to fix the justest Notions of Them in  
our Minds. We all feel what a kind of  
World we now inhabit ; and what a sort of  
X 2 Life



S E R M.

xv.




Life we now live: How full of Vexations, Troubles, Uneasinesses, and Uncertainties; that is, in other Words, how utterly inconsistent with Happiness. And yet we are commonly so foolish as to call the *Living* only *Happy*; as to think *Those Blessed*, who have Fields, and Houses, and Treasures, in Possession; who yet breathe this gross Air, and enjoy the good Things of this sordid Earth. If we see any of *Those* taken away, in whom we have any Concern; and an End put to their Designs, and a Stop given to the poor Prospect of Happiness They had here below; We are apt to Mourn over This, as some sort of Misery, tho' We know not what; and to think of *Them*, as the Unfortunate; and of *Ourselves*, who remain, as the Happy.

This Frame of Mind is owing, indeed, to that strong Love of the present Life, which the Author of our Nature has thought fit to implant in Us, in order to make Us *bear* a Life, which otherwise We should not, in many Cases, be able to sustain, so as to answer, in any degree, the Designs of his Wisdom, in placing us in this Scene of Things. But tho' there be somewhat in this, which unavoidably results from the Nature of Man; yet the Excess of this Weakness is to be corrected by Reason and Religion; Both designed for the ridding




ridding Men's Minds of all false Apprehensions, especially in Matters of so great Importance. Sense itself, indeed, is sufficient to satisfy Us very effectually, that this World is not so desirable a State, as that We should be solicitous to confine either Ourselves, or Those whom we wish Happy, to it: And there needs but very little Experience, and the Trial of a very few Days, to make Us *feel* this Truth, without the Trouble of much Thought, or Reflexion. And then, Reason and Religion open to Us another Scene of Things; a future State of Stable Happiness: A State of Ease and Quiet; of Freedom from Pain, and Grief, and Trouble, and Uneasiness; without Uncertainty, or Anxiety, or Fear, or Terror; out of the Reach of what we call Fortune, or Malice, or Envy, or Detraction, or any Evil; and full of all the Real Goods that We can be capable of enjoying.

And as Religion opens to Us the Prospect of such a Scene; so it assures us, it is prepared for the good and virtuous Part of Mankind; for Those who, *by patient Continuance in Well-doing, have sought after Honour, and Glory, and Immortality.* And consequently, it teaches Us to correct these Unjust Conceptions, and Partial Notions, about Happiness;

SERM. not to call any Persons *Blessed* before their  
 xv. Death ; nor to fix that Appellation upon Any,  tho' never so Rich, never so Honourable, never so Good, whilst They are in a State full of a Succession of hazardous Trials, and Uncertain Events ; of Tormenting Cares, and Uneasy Disappointments : And to account *Those* only properly *Blessed*, who have lived, as Men ought to live, in the Practice of all Virtue, and Goodness ; and are removed out of such a State as this ; and safely arrived at a better.

This is the *Lesson* which the Words I have now read to you, will easily lead Us to : If We consider Them, not with Regard only to those Times to which They may be supposed peculiarly to relate, in their first Intention ; but as a General *Lesson*, extending itself to all Times and Places, and adapted to the Ordinary State of the *Christian* World. They are introduced in a Manner so solemn and extraordinary, as to raise such a Surprise in the Hearers, as naturally increases their Attention. *I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead, which die in the Lord : — Yea, saith the Spirit ; that They may rest from their Labours ; and their Works do follow them.*

In prosecution, therefore, of my present SERM.  
Design, in so general an Extent, it will, I xv.  
think, be natural and proper, from these   
Words,

I. To consider, Who they are that may be truly said, according to the Terms of the Gospel, to *Die in the Lord*: So that We may judge, Who They are that have a Title to that Word *Blessed*, so solemnly here pronounced upon Them.

II. To shew on what accounts They may be said to be *Blessed*, from what is included in the latter Part of the Words, *That They may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.*

I. The *first* Point is, to consider, Who they are that may be truly said, in the Sense of the Gospel, *To die in the Lord*: So that We may judge, Who they are that have a Title to the Word, *Blessed*, so solemnly here pronounced upon Them. And if we be sincere and in earnest, This Enquiry will quickly come to an Issue; and presently end in a certain Resolution. For every honest *Christian*, who searches in order to find the Truth, will presently collect from the original Design, from the whole Tenor, and from the express Words of the *Gospel*, that They only can be properly said to *Die*



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*in the Lord*, who may truly be said to have lived *in the Lord*; that is, to have lived so, as that Our Blessed Lord will own Them at the last Day for his true Followers. *To Die in the Lord*, is *To die* in the Happy relation of a sincere Disciple to *Jesus Christ*, and of a good and faithful Servant to our Great Master. And who can be said to *die* thus, but They who have contracted that Relation by a former Life, led by his Rules, and conducted by his Will? They, who have shewn themselves *His* Disciples by such plain Marks and Characters, as He himself has declared to be the only Marks and Characters by which He will know them?

This then we may certainly conclude, That *To die in the Lord*, cannot signify merely to die in the Faith of *Jesus Christ*; believing and confessing Him to be our Lord and Master; acknowledging him the Saviour of the World; and confidently applying, at last, the Remedy of his Merits to the Evil of a Life spent in the willful and habitual Transgression of his Laws. If the Reason of the Thing, and the Nature of God himself, did not lead Us to this, the express Declaration of *Christ* himself would be sufficient, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but He that doth*  
*the*

*the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* S E R M.

And to do the Will of his Father, is to live in a sincere and uniform Obedience to all God's Commands, and all his Laws equally, as far as They are made known to Us.

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Nor is it a more secure Presumption in Men, to imagine that, in order *to die in the Lord*, or to die a happy Death, it is enough to take Refuge in the Sorrow and Contrition of a Death-bed ; or in confessing and detesting those Sins in Death, which they would never be once persuaded to quit through their whole Life. For *to die in the Lord*, being to die in the Relation of a true Disciple to Him ; and the Marks and Characters of that Relation having been settled and declared by Himself, and established long ago upon the Nature of his Design, and the End of his Appearance in the World : The Imaginations of Men are not to be consulted ; but his Will, and his Declarations. And as the great End of his Appearance was to preach Repentance to the Living, and not to the Dying ; as Men are not called in the Gospel only, or chiefly, to grieve for their Sins ; but to forsake them, and amend their Lives, by *bringing forth Fruits meet for Repentance* ; and as *the Wrath of God is revealed in it from Heaven* against all Wilful and Habitual Sin : It is impossible for Any, who are not

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not resolved to flatter themselves into Destruction, to conceive that *to die in the Lord*, or to die happily, can possibly be the Result of Sorrow and Grief at the last Moments; or that any such Frame of Mind can be the End aimed at by the Dispensation of the Gospel, or any good Foundation of that *Blessedness* which is declared in it.

No one can be said, with any sort of Propriety, to die a happy Death, or *to die in the Lord*, who, at the Time of his Death, has not a Title, upon the express Terms of the Gospel, to Eternal Life. And there are otherguise Conditions of Eternal Life laid down to *Christians*, than Sorrow and Contrition for Sins which They can now no longer live in. *If thou wouldst enter into Life, keep the Commandments. Ye are my Friends, if ye do what I command you. The Righteous shall go into Life Eternal, and the Wicked into Everlasting Punishment. And He only, who doth Righteousness, is Righteous*, in the Sense of the Gospel. These are Declarations sufficient to awaken any *Christians* out of so fatal a Dream, as They are in, who have Recourse to Inventions of their own; who indulge Themselves in laying Schemes inconsistent with the whole Design of *Christianity*; and in forming Projects of Salvation, which the Gospel of Salvation

tion knows nothing of. For as They only shall inherit Eternal Life, who have patiently persevered in Well-doing ; as far as the Terms of God's favour have been made known to Us : So it is as plain, as Words can make it, that the only Road to a happy Death, is a *Christian* Life ; and that they only can, with any Degree of Assurance, be said to *Die in the Lord*, who have lived with all the Essential Characters of his Disciples upon them ; whose Lives have been conducted by his Laws, and filled with the Fruits of his Spirit. I come now to the *Second* Thing I proposed,

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II. To consider, on what accounts They may be said to be *Blessed*, from what is included in the latter Part of the Words, *That they may rest from their Labours ; and Their Works do follow them.*

1. They *rest from their Labours.* This *Life* is as full of Cares, and Fears, and Uneasinesses, and Disappointments, as it is of Days : And in the Scripture-pharse, *Man is born to Trouble*, and as naturally tends to it, as the *Sparks fly upwards*. Consider a little the Conditions and Terms, upon which, generally speaking, We *live* in this World ; and You will see, it is no very inconsiderable Thing to *rest from the Labours* of such a Life. If We continue in  
this



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this State for any Time, We live, not in order to die one single Death at last, at the End of our Term; but rather to die a Thousand Deaths, through the several Days, and Months, and Years, We are said *to live*. We *live* indeed in Name and Appearance: That is, We breath, and move, and perceive, and have Senses. But We live, either to feel such Degrees of Misery in Ourselves, or to see such Scenes of Unhappiness in Others, as are sufficient often to interrupt our Course of Joy, and to embitter the few Pleasures this State can pretend to. We often live to inherit Sicknes and Pain; to be Burnt by Fevers; or to be Tormented by the Returns of Stone or Gout; or to be consumed and wearied out by some other Distemper, which has it in its Power to make Us uneasy to Ourselves, and troublesome to those about Us. We often survive the Loss of our Estates, our Health, our Reputation; Every one of which, to Many, is worse than Death itself. We live sometimes to see Ourselves sacrificed to the Fraud and Perfidy of Others; to be forsaken by Professed Friends, and insulted by Outrageous Enemies; to be persecuted by the Malice of Evil Tongues, and covered with the Reproaches of Men.


We

We spend perhaps some Years; and watch S E R M.  
Days and Nights, in projecting some Scheme XV.  
of Happiness: And in bringing this to a toler-  
able Perfection. And when, by much Labour, We think We are come to the End of  
our Wishes and Desires; *somewhat* almost al-  
ways intervenes between Us and Happiness;  
and is appointed to stop Us in our Career.  
After much Labour in a tempestuous Sea,  
We are perhaps shipwrecked in the Port it-  
self: And are either taken off within View of  
the Possession; or else the Possession itself is  
so far from answering our Expectations, that  
our former Expectations, by being disappoint-  
ed, do themselves only serve to make Us the  
more completely miserable, in the midst of  
Possession.

But as these daily Disappointments never  
weary out the natural Desire and Pursuit of  
Happiness; but it returns, after numberless  
Trials, to Fresh Proposals and New Projects  
with the same Eagerness of Expectation and  
Assurance; there is nothing more common  
than for Men still to go on to imagine, that  
the Accomplishment and Success of such and  
such particular Wishes and Designs, would go  
a great Way towards a perfect Ease and Con-  
tentment. But when again, these are per-  
mitted to have Success; (as they are some-  
times,

SERM. times to convince Us of our own Incapacity  
 xv. of Judging in this Case;) What are We the  
 nearer? Something or other again invades  
 our Repose: and We find it in the Power of  
 a Multitude of Accidents, never to be foreseen,  
 to Discompose and Ruine the whole Fabric of  
 Happiness which We have raised in our Ima-  
 ginations. Nay, whatever it be, from which  
 We have any Expectations of Happiness, it is  
 frequently seen that This itself, upon that very  
 Account, is what serves to make Us most Un-  
 happy.

Such is the Condition of our Life here!  
 Either, not to have our most passionate Wishes  
 granted Us; which is present Unhappiness:  
 Or, if We have them granted, to find, by a  
 comfortless Experiment, that We have  
 fought *Misery* instead of *Happiness*; and em-  
 brace a vain Shadow, where We expected a  
 substantial Good. Our Enjoyments, at best,  
 are but Few: And those Few continually  
 dashed with the Mixture of many Ills, and the  
 Intervention of Unforeseen Misfortunes, which  
 are powerful enough to spoil our *Good*, and  
 change it into *Evil*. In the mean while,  
*Iniquity* often triumphs; and extends its Con-  
 quests over all that can be called Virtuous and  
 Praise-worthy. The *Best* that can be said is,  
 That, tho' Virtue always tends, in its Nature,  
 to

to Peace and Happiness, yet here below, S E R M.  
*There is one Event to the Righteous and the* XV.  
*Wicked: But Worse* may too often be said,   
 That the Good Man, who alone has a Claim  
 to the *Favour* of Providence, seems, some-  
 times, in this State, to have little *Title* even  
 to its *Protection*. In the midst of *Life*, are  
 We thus in *Death*: In the midst of *Virtue* it-  
 self, encompassed with the Punishments of  
*Vice*: In the midst of Enjoyment, under the  
 Apprehension of Loss and Disappointment:  
 And the higher We are seated in what We  
 have Thought fit to imagine our Happiness,  
 so much the nearer are We to a Precipice,  
 and liable to a so much greater and more ter-  
 rible Downfal.

When We take a View of *Life*, encompass-  
 ed with all these Circumstances, Who would  
 not, in Reason, be led to rejoice in the  
 Thought of *Resting from the Labours* of such  
 a Life? And were We happily removed out  
 of it; how unkind an Office of Love should  
 We think it, were it possible, for the Wishes  
 and Desires of Friends to call Us back again?  
 To *live* indeed, even in such a State as this,  
 is made the Natural Desire of Men: And to  
*Die* is appointed to carry somewhat of Terror  
 along with it, for wise and good Reasons. But  
 were We once successfully delivered from the  
Waves



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Waves of this Tempestuous Sea ; what could move Us to trust Ourselves to their Mercy again ? Were we once gone off this Stage of Combats and Hazards, with Glory ; What could incline Us to renew our own Dangers and Labours ? Were we once *dead in the Lord*, with the Conscience of a well-spent Life, and a virtuous Conversation ; What could be of Force enough to engage to Us willingly to revive our Acquaintance with a World of Cares and Troubles ; and to live a Life over again, attended with all Those Unevennesses, Sollicitudes, Disquiets, Expectations, Disappointments, Hopes, Fears, Despairs, Small Goods, and Great Evils, which We have before seen and felt to make up its Train ; and to be inseparably united to it ? *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord : For they rest from their Labours.* This is one Consideration.

2. The other Consideration is, That They not only *rest from their Labours* of such a Life as this is ; but *Their Works do follow them* : that is, The Life of Good Works which they have led here below, and without which They could not be said to *die in the Lord* ; (as I have before explained it ; ) This Life of Universal Virtue is remembered, by the Mercy of God, to their Eternal Honour and Advantage.

Those Works *follow* them, to which the Promise of Glory and Immortality is made; to which the Favour of God is annexed, and the Rewards of Heaven solemnly promised: And these are the *Works of the Spirit*; the Effects of Noble Principles, and the Fruits of a well-grounded Faith; the Works of Love, Beneficence, Justice, Patience, Humility, and all the Train of Virtues, the End of which is declared in the Gospel to be *Eternal Life*, and Blessedness for ever.

This is the State of those who *die in the Lord*, if we take in both Parts of what is here pronounced, to prove and denominate them truly *Blessed*. *They rest from their Labours*: They cease from a Life of Impertinence, Imperfection, and Misery. And *Their Works follow them*: They change this Life, for the Rewards of those Virtues which they practised in it. They Change this Miserable, Low, Unsatisfactory, and Uneasy State, for Another, in which neither Misery, nor Dissatisfaction, nor Uneasiness, are known: But in their stead, All that can be wished for; and Every thing that can result from the Favour and Love of God; from a Mind filled with the Remembrance of a sincere and upright Conduct; from a Conscience at Peace with itself; and from the Assurance of a lasting and cer-

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tain

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S E R M. tain Happiness, communicated by never-failing

xv. Goodness, and guarded by Almighty Power.

How *Blessed* therefore, above what we can express or conceive, must the Good *Christian* be, when, instead of the *Images* of *Death* which fill up the Scenes of what we call *Life* here below, He shall know, in Himself, what *Life* is ; and be satisfied, by his own Experience, that to *Live* is to be *Happy* ! When, instead of the Uncertainties and Disappointments ; the Vicissitudes of Pain and Pleasure ; the Changes of Sorrow and Joy ; the Returns of Evil ; the Afflictions, Calamities, and Reproaches, in the midst of which he has passed his Hours here on Earth ; He shall meet with the Certainty of a stable Habitation ; with Unmixed and pure Happiness ; with an Unmoveable State of all that is truly Good, without the Fear or Suspicion of Loss or Diminution ; out of the reach of Tempests and Convulsions, and sudden Turns of Empire and Fortune ! With a State, in which the Established Favour of God is the Security ; and in which the Perfection of Mutual Sincerity and Unbounded Charity cannot fail to make Society the greatest Delight, of which Rational Creatures are capable !

The Time will not allow Me to enlarge farther upon this. I have endeavoured to  
give

give You as useful Lessons as I could, from the Words I first read to You ; and as proper, as any can be, to the present Occasion of our meeting together. But I must not end here. Whilst we are paying our last Regards to the Remains of an excellent Person, who is gone before Us to a Blessed Immortality, I esteem myself particularly engaged, in Justice and Gratitude, not to pass over in Silence what I think, or know, to be due to the *Memory* of *One*, who has a Right to our Remembrance ; and to the *Example* of *One*, in whose Life and Death We may see the *Truth* of what I have been laying before you.

I will begin where all true Religion either does, or ought to begin. As it pleased God to bless Her with an uncommon Degree of Good Sense and Understanding ; so, it was manifestly her great Endeavour to make a proper Use of so great an Happiness, by laying the Foundation both of her Faith and Conduct in the most rational, the most just, and most certain Notions of God, and of his Perfections, within her own Mind. By these She judged of Doctrines, and of Practices : And by these She was led into that Just and Lovely Notion of Religion, which supported her under the Evils of this Life, and carried Her forward to the Enjoyments of a Better.



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Upon this Foundation She embraced *Christianity*, with her Understanding as well as her Heart, as agreeable to the Natural Notions of the Supreme Being: And upon This, she esteemed it the Glory of the Gospel, that it was worthy of a Good God, Plain, Practical, and Useful. Nor did I ever observe Her to be better pleased, than when the Great Duties of it were preached and inculcated, in their native Plainness and Simplicity.

It was by these sound Notions of Almighty God, and his Will, that She was truly *Religious*, without any of the uneasy Mixtures of *Superstition*; and truly *Pious*, without any of the undue Heats of *Enthusiasm*. It was by these same Notions of God and his Providence, that She preserved her Soul in that Uncommon Composure, in all the Events, and under all the Evils of Life, which is very rarely seen. Such a Courage and Presence of Mind, in the many Attacks of Pain and Sickness which She experienced, (much greater than She would ever discover by any of her own Complaints;) such a Resignation, and such a Fortitude, beyond what may strictly be called Patience, under all that was laid upon Her, are seldom, equalled, and never exceeded.

And as it was to these just Notions of God and his Perfections, that She owed her own  
*Christian*

*Christian* Conduct; so it was by the same, that She was led, uniformly and constantly, to be of the most favourable and charitable Disposition towards all Persons, in whom the Marks of Sincerity and Honesty appeared, amidst all their differing Sentiments concerning the Methods of worshiping and pleasing God. Those Divisions upon Religious Accounts, which She lamented, She thought might be covered with Charity; but never could be cured by Violence and Oppression, without bringing in much greater Evils than such Methods could pretend to remove. And therefore, the Doctrine of Universal Love, and Mutual Forbearance, was That which she always expressed the greatest Pleasure to hear enforced upon Men's Minds; and from which alone She expected any Remedy to the Evil Tempers and Passions of Men.

Of her compassionate Regard to the Outward Miseries of the Poor and distressed Part of the World, were I to speak only from my own Knowledge, This I could say, that I myself ever found Her disposed both to hear and to relieve; and have myself known, in many Instances of Distress which have come before Her, very liberal Supplies, afforded with the Heart of a *cheerful Giver*. And I can appeal to many now living, who, I know, in many

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more Cases, (in which the Removal of Mi-  
fery, or the procuring some Good to the  
Afflicted Part of Mankind, were concerned,)  
have received very large and very Noble Proofs  
of her Charitable Disposition, to be applied to  
those good Ends. But *They* will speak most  
feelingly who themselves have partaken of it:  
*They* particularly, in these Parts, whose Fa-  
milies have been chiefly supported by her  
Bounty, whose Pains and Sicknesſes have been  
abated or removed by her Compassion, and  
Remedies; whose Children have been Cloth-  
ed and Taught at her Expence; and whose  
repeated Wants have received Redress from  
her repeated Goodness: Whose Condition I  
was going now to lament; but I consider that  
They may still promise Themselves the Conti-  
nuance of the same Beneficence, and the same  
Supplies.

She had too great a Soul, and too compre-  
hensive a Compass of Thought, not to judge  
well of the Public Interest of Her Country;  
and not to think herself too deeply concerned  
in it, to sit by an Unconcerned Spectator of  
its Condition. She understood, as well as any  
One, in what Point True Liberty was placed;  
between Licentiousness on one hand, and Ty-  
ranny on the other. She knew as well as  
any One, the Value to be set upon such a Li-  
berty

berty, of being governed by Laws framed by S E R M.  
 Consent ; and not by Arbitrary Will. And She xv.  
 was sensible, to the highest Degree, of how great  
 Consequence and Necessity the present Estab-  
 lishment was, to make so great a Happiness  
 lasting to Us and our Posterity. I speak this  
 to her Honour, as I think it none of the least  
 Parts of Her Character, that, with Respect  
 to her *Country*, She was full of such Sentiments  
 as naturally arise from an Extensive Love to  
 the Happiness of Mankind ; from a Benevo-  
 lent Temper, and Good Disposition towards  
 Posterity itself ; and from a Tender Regard to  
 the Good of Human Society. And Her Joy  
 or Grief, her Pleasure or Uneasiness were propor-  
 tionable to these Sentiments ; and such as shew-  
 ed them to be sincere. Nothing hardly was  
 ever seen to give Her a more sensible Delight,  
 than the Good Success of any thing which  
 tended to establish so great an Happiness. No-  
 thing hardly was ever seen to give Her a more  
 sensible Pain, or to force from Her more Un-  
 easy Expressions, than even the least Appear-  
 ance of any thing which interrupted the Pros-  
 pect, or tended to shake the Foundation, of  
 Public Good.


Of her Uncommon Prudence in her Pri-  
 vate Affairs, I need say the less, because her  
 Name has been long known in this Part of



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the World, and celebrated with Honour upon that Account. It pleased God, that She was left, almost at her first Apperance in the World, with the entire Management of a very great Estate; enough to try the Strength of any Head, and the Force of any Heart. But with what Applause to her Conduct, and with what Approbation of Her Behaviour, She passed through Circumstances of so delicate a Nature; the World has been Witness: Whilst She acted like a Person disengaged from Herself; regardless of all the Amusements, and Pleasures that such a Fortune could Place in her Way; and centering all her Thoughts in *Another* over whom She first watched with the Regards of the Tenderest Mother, and with whom She afterwards lived in the Endearments of the most intimate Friendship; partaking in her Cares, and her Counsels, for the good of that Noble Young Family, who already Promise to the World all the Fruits that can be expected from so much Sollicitude.

And here, indeed, the Part she acted was one almost uninterrupted Scene of the most serious Concern, tempered with a Pleasing Affability, and a constant Good Humour, which made Her the Love of Those whose Improvement and Accomplishment She was making

making the Labour of her Life. Her End S E R M.  
was to lead them gently into the right Path ; XV.  
and to the willing Choice of that Virtue,   
which She knew would be their Great and  
only lasting Good. And it seemed, indeed,  
from her never ceasing Care, as if all her  
Happiness depended upon the Success of her  
Concern here. Her Words and Looks were  
Pleasure itself, when She spoke of the Im-  
provements She at any Time saw in Those  
She so truly loved. And the Promises of Fu-  
ture Good, in the Virtuous Dispositions and  
great Endowments, which She perceived to  
answer, if not to go before, her Wishes,  
seemed to give her a more touching Delight  
than all the World besides could afford Her.

But it did not please God to continue her  
Life to that \* Age to which many arrive ;  
and in which she might have hoped to see  
those Promises made good. She was seized  
with her last Illness, and called out of the  
World, at a Time when She might have  
found very peculiar Reasons to desire Life  
some few Years longer. But yet, far from ima-  
gining Herself the Judge of this, She never  
once indulged the Thought of Life, from the

\* She died in the Fifty Eighth Year of her Age, April 19,  
1719.

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first Attack to the last Moment. In the midst of all her Illness, which was of that Nature as sometimes to indispose Her, one would think, to such a Guard over Herself, Her Great and Constant Care was to render Herself as little uneasy to Others as possible; to appear Fearless, in order to cure the Fears of Those about Her; and to keep all the Signs of what She felt in Herself, from shewing Themselves to Those who, She knew, would have but too much to bear when the Stroke should come. Every Thing was Easy, Quiet, and Prepared within. She resigned Herself to (what, from the Beginning, She looked upon as certain) Death, with all that Composedness and Calmness which might accompany any ordinary Action of Life. And whilst She was all along persuaded of her own dying Condition, She watched over all her own Words: And suffered not any one Mark of that Persuasion to proceed from her in the Presence of those who were most Dear to Her; nor any one Sign of Uneasiness, which might discompose Those, for whom, at Death, She retained the same True Tenderness, which She had ever demonstrated through her Life.

She is now removed from Us. She is at rest from the Labours of a Life, which, in the midst

midst of an Affluence of Riches, She experienced to be full enough of Cares within, and Pain and Affliction without. *She rests from her Labours: And her Works follow her.* Her Example remains to Those who are left behind her: And the Memory of her Excellencies, to Those who follow Her.

May Almighty God support Those who are most nearly concerned, under so great a Loss! And may They and We, all prepare Ourselves, by a Life of True Religion, and Universal Obedience to God's Laws, for a happy Death: That it may be said of Us, when that Hour shall come which must come, *Bliss'd are the Dead which Die in the Lord — For they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them!*

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# SERMON XVI.

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Preached before the House of Lords at *St. Peter's Westminster*, on *Jan. 30, 1720-21.* being the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of K. CHARLES I.

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*Now all these things happened unto them for Ensamples.*

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YOU will easily perceive, from my choosing these Words, as an Introduction to what I am now going to say, That it is my Design to make use of that Black and Unhappy Part of our *English* History, which we are commanded by Authority to call to mind on *this Day*, in such a manner as to make such Observations upon it, and draw such Lessons from it, as may be of most Service to Ourselves, in order to prevent and avoid those *Evils*, which *happened unto* our Forefathers, *for Ensamples* to Us their Posterity : just as the Unhappineſſes and Wickedneſſes of the *Jews* in former Ages, are here in the Text

set before the Eyes of their Followers by St. S E R M.  
*Paul.* XVI.

To open unnecessarily any old Wounds that are now closed up, and make them bleed afresh; To widen any that are now open, and to inflame them still more and more: These Things are as far from my Inclination and Temper, as They are contrary to All that I know of Religion. I had much rather pour Oyl into Any that remain, and apply Nothing but soft and healing Medicines: Nay, if it were possible, I would cast a Veil over every Mark of past Infamy, or even Imperfection, on all Sides; were it not for Fear, We might at the same Time lose some of the Best Lessons, and most Useful Observations, for our own Conduct.

To run with Violence against Any One Sort of Men now in being: To fix the Guilt of *That* upon All of One general Denomination, which All the Chief of them detested by a public Remonstrance at the Time of the Transaction: To lay *That* upon the *Generality* of a Nation, which even in the *First Zeal* against it, was declared by public<sup>a</sup> Authority to be the Work of a *Few*, at that Time possessed of Power: Or, to load with all possible Aggravations the unjustifiable Proceedings on *One*

<sup>a</sup> *Prockam.* King Charles II. 1660.

SERMON. Side only, and to clear the *Other* of every Thing that looks like Guilt : These are Points, which common Justice and Equity (not to mention Compassion and Charity) forbid Us to do.

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But to teach Ourselves to avoid what we rightly blame in Others ; to take Care that True and Just Principles of Public Good do not suffer in the Esteem of Men, thro' the Mistakes or Wickedness of Such as were Strangers to them, or only pretended to make use of them ; and that the Memory of *true Patriots* may not be cursed, for the Sake of the *Infamy* of *Usurpers* ruling by mere Power and Armed Force : To learn, from the Review of former Unhappineffes, every Thing that can be of Use to help Us in the Preventing Any the like Miseries for the Time to come, or the Curing any present Evils : *These*, and the like, are *Points* worthy of Persons concerned for the Good of their Country ; and Such, as may render this Fast, not a *Fast for Strife and Debate*, nor merely a *Fast for Shame and Reproach* ; but a *Day* of Useful Instruction, in the Paths which lead to Public Peace, and the Establishment of all that is valuable in human Society.

The main Points which *this Day* recalls to our Minds, I shall connect together in the following Manner, in order to introduce the Observa-

fervations I design: — That there was, in the SERM.  
*Days* of our Forefathers, to which we now look XVI.  
 back, a Zeal in the Representatives of *England*,  
 in Parliament assembled, to oppose Every Ar-  
 bitrary Encroachment upon the *Legal Liber-*  
*ties* and *Properties* of the Subject: — That,  
 by Degrees, and by the Concurrence of many  
 Accidents, the Passions, and Rage, and Re-  
 venge, of *Some*, by the Help of mutual *Provo-*  
*cations*, mixed themselves too much in the  
 Contest: — That Ambitious, and Designing,  
 and Desperate Men, took occasion from hence  
 to set their own Machines on work: --- That  
 the various and contradictory Schemes of *Be-*  
*lief* and *Worship*, embraced at that Time, (All  
 equally honoured with the Name of *Religion*)  
 were called in, to heat the Imaginations of Men  
 and to help forward the common Ruine: ---  
 That at length this ended in the Destruction of  
 the *Legal Constitution*; in confounding even  
 all Appearance of Freedom in what remained  
 of a *Parliament*; in an *Usurped Power*, sup-  
 ported by *Force* against the Consent of the Na-  
 tion, and with the Abhorrence of the greatest  
 Friends to *Legal Liberty*; and in the *Murder*  
 of the KING, against the Voices of *All*, but  
 Such as then began to find themselves to have  
 no Security but from an *Armed Force*. A *Fact*  
 which, as I truly detest; and am led to do so by  
 all



SERM. all the *Principles* I know any thing of: so, if  
 XVI. any Words of mine could aggravate, considered in all its Circumstances, They never should be wanting. These are the Main Parts of the History now before Us; upon which I shall proceed to build some *Observations*. And,

I. I shall take leave to Warn against One Use which may sometimes have been made of *this* Part of our History; and That is, The arguing from the Bad Event of Things, contrary to the Wishes and Designs of the Best and Wisest Men, against all such Opposition to *Illegal Encroachments*, and *Arbitrary Proceedings*, as first opened the Scene. For, As, in *Argument*, nothing is more *injudicious*, than to plead against *One thing*, because *Another thing* of a quite different Nature succeeded to it, thro' the wicked Designs of some Men; and the unaccountable Concurrence of a thousand *Accidents*: So, in *Political* Affairs, nothing can be more *fatal*, than to draw a *Conclusion*, from such Events, which must lay the Foundation of Uninterrupted and Hopeless Slavery. The Nature and Reason of Things abhors such an *Inference*: which would at once take away all the Right of a *Free Nation*; and make their Meeting together in *Parliament*,  
 only



only a more *Solemn Form* of *Absolute Submission* to whatever the *Will* of Another shall lay upon them. *All* in the Administration of Government, who are *Wise*, would not wish to have such a Temptation to *Evil* laid in their Way: *All*, who are *Good*, would even oppose and prevent such a dangerous Piece of *Servile Subjection*: and *All*, who are *Bad* enough to wish for it, deserve, for that very Reason, to have the *Terror* of the *Contrary* before their Eyes; that so, what They will not refrain from for *Conscience*, yet for *Wrath's* Sake may be avoided. Let that Lesson, therefore, of *Good*, remain untouched, which under an *Administration*, by which the *Liberties* and *Laws* of the *Country* are preserved unviolated, can do no hurt; and under *One*, which assumes the Power of acting *without* or *against* Law, is of *Absolute Necessity* to prevent *Public Ruine*.

There is the less Occasion for *Argument* upon *this Head*, because the *Best* of *Those Historians*, and Other Writers, who have shewn the greatest Warmth against what followed, yet have been far from condemning those *Beginnings* of Zeal for the *Public*, which tended in their natural Consequences to the lasting Good of the *King* and the *Whole Body*; and could not have been diverted from attaining that End, but by the Unreasonableness, and

SERM. private Views, of such on each Side, as had  
 XVI. nothing less at Heart than either the *Greatness*  
 of their *King*, or the *Good* of their *Country*:  
 Two Things, which in our Constitution are so  
 happily *joined together*, that They can never be  
*put asunder*.

And what is still a Greater Consolation, is,  
 that, tho' such *Lessons* of *Subjection* may have  
 been taught by Persons of Leisure, little versed  
 in the Affairs of Human Life, yet We  
 have seen with Pleasure that All Sorts, and  
*Parties*, (if I must use that Word,) of Men  
 amongst Us, have, (to their Honour be it spoken)  
 in their several Turns, and as constantly as  
 any Opportunity offered it self, openly and  
 zealously made Opposition to Any Attempts,  
 which They either knew, or imagined, to affect  
 the known Laws and Liberties of their Country.  
 Nay, it must be acknowledged, that *None*  
 have shewn more of this Spirit *in Parliament*,  
 than *Those* who have seemed fearful of giving  
 too great Encouragement to *Liberty*, for fear  
 of the ill Consequences of it: And it ought  
 ever to be accounted one Part of their great  
 Glory, that *out of Parliament*, in the greatest  
 and happiest Struggle for *Public Liberty*, which  
 the present Generation, or perhaps any other,  
 ever was witness to, *Their Part* was great and  
 remarkable, in opposing the Encroachments  
 of

of *Arbitrary Power*, and even in inviting an Armed Force to make that Opposition successful : The only appearing Difference between *Them* and *Others*, if we may judge by *Practice* being This, that, whilst *They* are both equally jealous of Every supposed Attempt against their Liberties, the *One* sort may imagine *That* to be so, which the *Other* do not ; and the *One* sort may be fearful lest the Defense of their own *Practice* should impress too great a Sense of *Liberty* upon the Minds of Men ; whilst the *Other* may think it best not only to vindicate what is in itself praise-worthy, but to scatter the Light of *Legal Liberty* into all Corners of the Land, and to inspire the Love of it into the Heart of Every Subject.

If We, therefore, consider such Lessons of Submission with regard to the Practice of the Wisest and Best on *all Sides* ; We may see how *Vain*, as well as how *Reproachful*, on All equally, they are : If we consider them in a *Political* Light ; They present Us with nothing but Certain Slavery without any possible *Chance* for the contrary : If We consider them in the way of *Argument* merely ; They are no better than *This*, That We ought not to do what is necessary for the Preservation of a Whole Nation because it may happen that We may be ruined afterwards in another way ; or, That a



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Man ought not to save himself from present Imminent Death, because it is possible that in the Struggle He may put himself into a *Fever*, which may afterwards prove mortal ; Or, That a *Good Thing* ought not to be attempted, because a *Bad Thing* may possibly happen some Time afterwards, which is neither the natural Consequence of the *Former*, nor could be foreseen by the Wisest of Men. This leads us to observe,

II. The Unreasonableness of casting the Reproach of this Day's Fact, and of every Thing before and after it, upon the Principles of *True Liberty*, in general ; and upon the *Defenders* of them : Whereas it will appear, upon a serious Consideration, (however it may sound at first hearing,) That, of *all Men*, *These* are led by their *Principles*, if they understand them, to an utter and settled Disapprobation of what They have the Reproach of favouring. For what is the *Liberty* contended for, by all Men of Honesty, and Understanding ? Not Licentiousness : Not a Right to overturn *Laws* and *Constitutions*, whenever Passion or Rage dictate ; and the favourable Opportunity of *Power* offers it self : Much less, a *Licence*, under Pretense of *Liberty*, to destroy all Freedom in Parliament ; to set up  
an

an Arbitrary Power, and maintain it by Force of Arms, Nothing of all this; but every thing contrary to it. It is the *Liberty* which results from being governed by *Laws* made by *Consent*; the *Liberty* which results from these *Laws* being settled in such a manner, that the Innocent shall always know their own Defense from Injuries, and even the most *Guilty* know before-hand upon what their Guilt shall be founded: It is the secure Enjoyment of *Property*, and *Privileges*, granted by *Laws*, free from every thing that looks like Violence.

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The *End* of these *Laws* is to guard against the worst of all worldly Evils, *Arbitrary Power*, in whatsoever Shapes or Degrees it may pretend to shew it self, and upon whatsoever *Pretext* it may found such Pretensions; to preserve Judgment and Justice from the Influences of Passion and Private Resentment; and Punishment it self, in the Case even of the meanest Subjects, from becoming Cruelty. A Scheme of Happiness, not known in the Nations round about Us, either under *Absolute Monarchies*, or *Republics*; depending, one would judge from hence, entirely upon the Nature of that *Mixt Form* under which We live.

But what was the Case now before Us? We find plainly that a *Fact*, as shocking in it self, as it was opposite to the Temper of *English-*

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men, and contrary to the Maxims of the *English Government*, could not be so much as attempted, till the Freedom of *Parliament* was totally destroyed ; the *Balances* which keep our Government in an even Situation, torn asunder ; and an *Armed Force* made the Support of what remained of *Civil Government*.

This Proceeding is much more agreeable to the Maxims of Those who think and teach (if any such still remain) that *Arbitrary Power* is the best and fittest for the Government of Mankind ; than to the Sentiments of *Others* of a contrary Judgment. For in this Case, All of *Legislation*, as well as of *Government*, that remained, was influenced and supported by mere *Force*, which is always *absolute*. Nay, the Crime and Evil of *Usurpation* it self, upon their own *Scheme*, is so qualified in process of Time, that *Prescription* or *Possession*, maintained for a Term of Years, relieves Them at length of very much of their *First Abhorrence* of it. Whereas, No Length of Time, No Tenure of *Prescription*, can reconcile the Minds of Those who understand what *Legal Liberty* is, to the total Destruction of a *Legal Constitution*, and to the Settlement of mere Power. The very Thing which, at the End of some Years, would have comforted *Others*, if a long Possession of *Arbitrary Power* had continued amongst

mongst Us, seems to *Them* so big with *Public Misery*, and *Calamity*, that it heightens and inflames their Detestation of all Proceedings which were thought necessary to such an Evil: an Evil, which, if one Cunning and Daring *Usurper* had been succeeded by *Another*, might probably have cleaved to Us, and our Seed for ever; and have come at length to have been the Subject of Fulsome *Panegyric* to All the Admirers of Uncontrollable Power; and left to be lamented *in private* only by Such as *Those*, whose *Principles* are sometimes reproached as if They favoured what is absolutely inconsistent with them. This leads Us,

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III. To observe the perfect *Consistency* which there is between a well-grounded Disapprobation of that Scene of Things, which We this Day lament; and a settled and hearty Approbation of that *Great Transaction* in our own Days, upon which the present Establishment of our *Constitution* is founded. There may be *Those*, who are so little used to consider a Cause thoroughly, and to pursue it thro' all its Consequences, that They may be surprized to hear a thing so distant from what they have been used to. But yet it will be found certainly true, that *These two* Things are so far from being *Inconsistent*; that the very Same Principles which lead Men of Consideration to



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Approve the *Latter*, Direct and Influence Them to Disapprove the *Former*. For Instance, The Maxim, that there is in the Whole Nation a Right to preserve Themselves and their *Constitution* of Government, from Ruine, is so far from implying in it, that a *Particular Party* of a Nation has a *Right* to possess itself of the *Governing Power* by Force, or Trick; or to tear in Pieces a *Legal Constitution*; or to commit Acts of Violence against Every Branch of that *Constitution*, as well as against *Private Men*: It is so far, I say, from implying these things, that it strongly implies, and inforces the Contrary. As therefore, in the *One* Case, there was the Concurrence of All Ranks, and All the Differing Sorts, amongst Us, against all the *Armed Force* in the Land, contending whose Cries and Calls should be loudest for Relief; and in the *Other*, the Conjunction of a *Few*, secured only by their having all the *Armed Force*, then in being, on their Side: As, on the *One* hand, the Concurrence of the *Whole* was directly and truly designed for the Preservation of our *Legal Constitution*; and, on the *Other* hand, the Views of particular Men were to be carried on by the *Destruction* of that Constitution, and the extinguishing all Freedom of *Parliament*: As the *One* ended in the antient Form of *Legal Government*, and a stronger Establish-

Establishment of the *Rights* of *Subjects*, and s E R M.  
*Parliaments*; and the *Other* in a direct Avowal XVI.  
 of *Arbitrary Power*, where any of the Legal  
 Rights or Privileges, belonging to *Parliament*  
 or *People*, stood in the Way: As there are  
 These and the like, *Essential*, and Irreconcil-  
 able Differences between the *One* and the *O-*  
*ther*; (too many to be now enumerated;) it is  
 evident that the *Proceedings* of the *Whole Na-*  
*tion*, in the *One* Case stand approved and sup-  
 ported by the *same Principles*, which lead most  
 effectually to the Condemnation of the Pro-  
 ceedings of a *Part* possessed of *Power*, in the  
*Other* Case. But,

IV. As *these Things* happened to our Forefa-  
 thers for *Ensamples*; so let Them be *Ensam-*  
*ples* to Us, not only to choose what was *Good* in  
 the *Conduēt* of *Some*, but to avoid what was  
 Evil in *Others*, and what indeed hindred all  
 the *Good* which was proposed. The *Great*  
*Lesson* is, that on all Sides Men suffer not their  
 Personal Resentments, Passions, Disappoint-  
 ments, or Private Interests, to enter into their  
 Contests, where the Public is concerned: At  
 least, Let them guard against their Influences, as  
 much as it is possible for Human Nature to do.  
 I say, *As much as possible*, well knowing how  
 hard a Lesson this is, and how seldom the  
 Practice

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Practice of it is to be hoped for. There is something in *Self-Love* so deeply rooted, that Private Interests and Private Views have often a silent and effectual Influence upon Men, even when their Movements are not distinctly felt within. Nor would I be understood to insinuate, that it is always impossible that *These* should happen to fall in with what is truly for the *Public Good*. But this is by Accident: and it being really the Satisfaction of our *Passions*, which gives *Life* to all Proceedings in which *These* mix themselves, the *Experiment* upon this Account, is always dangerous. For the Nature and Operation of These Principles is such, that They will obscure or discolour the brightest *Object*: They will make *That* appear *reasonable*, which is *profitable*, or agreeable to some Present View; and throw a Disgrace upon whatever does not tend to satisfy Themselves. Take away *These*; and *Public Good* appears naked and open to every Eye, free from all Difficulties and Embarrassments: But let *These* enter in their full Strength; and *Public Good* becomes only *Another Word* for our own *Private Views* and *Passions*. But of All *Principles of Action* in Human Nature, *Revenge* for Personal Injuries is seen to make the greatest Havock in all Public Disputes and Disorders. For, as it is naturally *blind* against

all

all Light, and *Deaf* to all Argument ; so, it can be Sated by nothing but some one particular *Sacrifice* which it proposes; after which is compassed, it generally ends in Shame and Repentance. The Power of these Principles is known to be so great in Civil Affairs, that one main Foundation of all *Civil Government*, is, That Men ought not to be the Avengers of their own Personal Injuries ; And this Fundamental Maxim of *Society* is sacredly observed through the Whole Tenor of our *English Laws* : and never transgressed or neglected, but upon Extraordinary Occasions.

How terrible was the Force of *These* seen to be in the Days of our *Fathers* ; Especially, when they were set on Fire by that *mistaken Zeal*, ( the true and genuine *Enthusiasm*, ) which at once *inflames* and *consecrates* the *Passions* ; at once actuates them into *Rage* to all Extremities, and sanctifies that *Rage* by the sacred Names of *God* and *Religion* : By which it came to pass, that the Cause of every heated Imagination became the Cause of *God* ; that whatever Men thought well of, in Religious Affairs, for Themselves, They came to think it their Duty to force upon others ; and that *Mutual Toleration* was declared by *Some*, who once wanted it themselves, the *Greatest* of all the *Monsters* which those unhappy Times brought forth.

We



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We have much to learn from these Things ; and much to avoid. Let us imitate all that Zeal of our *Forefathers* for our *Legal Constitution* which was visibly designed, and naturally tended, to prevent future Encroachments of Power, either *against*, or *without*, Law : And let us fly far from all those *Methods*, which naturally paved the Way to the *Loss* of all that *Freedom* which they pretended to secure. Let us value our Liberties, as Honest Men : Not only for the Pleasure and Security They afford to Ourselves ; but as a *Trust* reposed in Us for our *Posterity*, much more *Sacred* and *Important* than any other Legacy of this World, that we can leave them. Let not our *Passions* be our first Instructors in any Step of our *Public Conduct* : But let them Themselves be instructed and guided by our *Reason*. Let our *Love* to what we justly approve, and choose for Ourselves in *Religion*, engage Us to such Charity and Forbearance towards *Others*, as may demonstrate our Gratitude for our own Happiness ; and our deep Sense that Whatsoever we may account the *Cause* of *God* is to be promoted by None but the *Methods* of *God*.

In a word, As *Britons*, enjoying the Blessings of a *Constitution* unknown to all the Countries around Us, even where the Word *Liberty* is still used ; and, As *Christians*, enjoying the

Light and Liberty of the *Gospel* ; Let us secure, as much as can be, the Repose and Comforts of this present Life, by valuing and preserving that *Form of Government* which administers so much Good to Us ; and let Us press, with unwearied Steps, to the Rewards of the *Life which is to come*, (free from all the Vicissitudes, and Confusions, of the happiest Kingdoms of this World) by *walking worthy of our Holy Vocation*, and adorning our Profession by a truly *Christian* and unblameable Conversation.

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*Which GOD grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ  
our Lord, &c.*

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*Of Christian Moderation.*

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S E R M O N XVII.

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Preached at St. Swithin's Church, on  
*Jan. 30, 1702-3.*

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
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PHILIPP. IV. 5.

*Let your Moderation be known unto all Men.*

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**T**HE Word which is here translated *Moderation*, signifies an Easiness and Gentleness of Mind, disposing Men, not only to be contented and quiet themselves, but to be pliable and yielding to Those around them, in order to the general Good; a Temper always ready, by all reasonable Methods, to promote and establish the Happiness of Themselves, and of the World about them. This Temper, we see, St. Paul doth most heartily recommend to *Christians*, nay, he desires it may be One of the more conspicuous and visible Parts of their Character; a Mark, as it were, to distinguish them from the World of ill-natured and inflexible

flexible Men ; and to make a Difference between Them, and the other Part of Mankind, who are not to be moved by any Considerations, to yield or bend to any Terms of Love and Peace. And yet, notwithstanding this, how little of this excellent Virtue do we see in the World ? And what little Hopes have we of seeing more of it ? Many Men take the Word into their Mouths, and use it as they see fit : *Some*, to ridicule, and make a Jest of it ; *Some*, to put it, as a false Colouring to Something bad underneath : And Many mistake Something Else for it ; and whilst they think they are possessed of it, are far removed from it. There seem to be Few, who have that Charity that is necessary to the very being of it ; and for want of this, Many can neither understand, nor heartily seek after it. And yet, from the want of this Virtue have proceeded very many of those Miseries Men have felt in their own Minds ; the Plagues of Impatience, Malice, and Revenge ; and almost all the Unhappineses and Ruines that have befallen *public Societies*. Why then should not Men be willing, if they have any Sense left of their own private Quiet ; if they have any Regard to the Happiness of their Neighbours ; if they be touched with any Concern for the Good of that Society they belong to ; nay if they but consider



SERM. consider the Share they may have, and their Pos-  
 XVII. ternity, in the Mischiefs and Disturbances that  
 shall befall it; why should not Men, I say, if  
 any such Considerations are worthy their Notice, (as certainly they are;) be ready to understand what this Virtue is, and to practise it? and be solicitous to know, (by their own Experience) what are the Properties and the blessed Fruits of it. And, since the great Apostle so particularly recommends it, why should they not (far from being ashamed of it,) glory in letting their *Moderation be known unto all Men*?

And this Subject I purposely now choose, because I am persuaded it is most proper for the sad Occasion of this Day, which I judge to be observed most according to the Design of it, when such material Points are insisted on, as, if they had been heartily embraced, would have prevented the Effects of that violent Spirit, the Characters of which it now bears; and will prevent all Like Evils, and mutual Outrages, for the future, if sincerely embraced on all hands.

What I design at present upon this Subject, shall be comprised under these three Heads:

I. I shall endeavour to shew what *Christian Moderation* is, by pointing out some of the chief



chief Properties of it, and of the Vice opposed to it.

II. I shall propose some proper Arguments to move us to pursue after it, and to possess Our selves of it.

III. I shall endeavour to lay down some Rules for the attaining it.

*First*, I say, I shall endeavour to shew what *Christian Moderation* includes in it, by pointing out some of the chief Properties of it, and of the Vice contrary to it, *viz. Violence*. I shall mention but two or three.

I. *Christian Moderation* will dispose us to be always ready to hear whatsoever can be reasonably offered, for the making up the Differences, and reconciling the Quarrels and Dissensions, amongst Men. It is a Virtue composed of Charity, Humility, and Peaceableness; and therefore must lead to the blessed Fruits of those Graces: and, upon the same account, it is utterly inconsistent with a Mind averse to Overtures of Peace; indisposed to hear of Union and Temper, where there have once been Differences; and resolved against Compliance, and an healing Disposition, where once there have been Breaches, and Provocations. This, indeed, is the Temper of Violence and Passion, which

SERM. cannot be conceived to enter into any Breast  
 XVII. without the Mixture of Pride, and Prejudice,  
 ~~~~~ and Revenge; or else without the Leaven of  
 some private Design, which too often is the
 Cause. But, to be more particular; In order
 to Peace and Union,

2. *Christian Moderation* will dispose Men
 not to be too hard upon their Brethren of dif-
 ferent Parties, or different Denominations; not
 to aggravate their Faults beyond due Measure;
 not to be ever incensing and inflaming them, by
 the Repetition, and lively Representation, of
 them, in what Colours they think fit; and this,
 not in order to make them themselves sensible
 of the Guilt of them, but to make them odious
 to the World, and hateful to all about them;
 the Mischief and Wickedness of which we ea-
 sily see in Others, tho' we too easily overlook it
 in Ourselves.

Christian Moderation forbids not that Men
 should be very fully satisfied with the Cause
 which they themselves espouse; or the way
 they choose themselves to walk in: but it for-
 bids them to be ever railing at Others; to
 be always cloathing the Mistakes and Fail-
 ings of Others in the worst Circumstances
 they can invent; or, to manage their own
 Cause so as to irritate, and not convince, those
 that oppose it, or do not fall in with it. It for-
 bids

bids us not to have a due Sense of any Crimes or Errors committed, or embraced, by Others, or to do our utmost to convince them in a Way proper for us to take ; and likely to have Effect upon them : But it forbids us to lay them open, after such a Manner, as tends to raise their Passions, and utterly indispose them to hear and receive what can be offered. It forbids us to charge All, of any Sort, with the Crimes of a Few: for that is fixing Crimes upon Those, who are not guilty of them. This is not the Way of Charity and Condescension ; this is not the Road to any tolerable degree of Harmony and Quiet in the World ; and is teaching Others but a bad Lesson against Ourselves. And where is the Good, and what will be the Issue, when the great Business going forward in a Nation, is a Contest between the differing Parts that make it up, who shall find most Faults in the other ; and aggravate them with the greatest Spleen and Keeness ; and paint them out in the worst and blackest Colours They can find : or, who shall represent their Brethren so as most effectually to vex and anger *Them* Themselves, as well as to set the World on Fire against them ? I say what good Issue can there be of this, unless the Good of a People consists in mutual Hatred, and a Readiness to destroy one another ? And yet how many Men think it almost their

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Duty to say any thing of Persons of differing Notions, and differing Measures, from themselves ? How many Men, who are not contented with being in what they judge to be a good Way themselves, with the Advantages of Truth and Right on their own Side ; not without such a due Sense of the Mistakes and Faults of others, as may inspire Them with 'a Desire to reclaim and amend them ; but think their Business is to irritate and expose them, as far as possible ; and imagine, that they cannot be just to their own Cause, without being unjust to that of others ; nay, that no one is truly and heartily in their Way of thinking, as to the main Object of their Zeal, who doth not join in the reviling, abusing, and unchristian Treatment, of all who think otherwise ? This is visible in many of all Parties, and all Sects, throughout the World ; and yet this is as certainly contrary to *Christian Moderation*, as it is to all Hopes of Peace in the World. For if *Christian Moderation* be a yielding and pliable Disposition of Mind, then it certainly tends to the uniting the Differences of Men : And if it does, whatever is wholly contrary to That, whatever lays the Foundation of eternal Variance, is contrary to it, and inconsistent with it.

But, once more, *Thirldy*, *Christian Moderation* will dispose us to yield up Things of little Importance,

Importance, and small Concern, for the sake of a greater Union, and a more strong Foundation for lasting Happiness and Peace amongst Men: much more, will it dispose Men to amend and reform what may be made better, for the same Ends. To be heartily concerned for the Substantials and Fundamentals of Religion; for Things of great Importance either to Church or State; for what is of Moment in the Worship of God, or the Government of Christian People, is that which all are obliged to. Nor doth *Christian Moderation* lay the least Obligation upon Us to yield in these Points. But when these are secured; and when, without any prejudice to these, something may be granted, something may be altered or amended; or added: and this, either good in itself, or, at least, not at all blameable, and highly advantageous to the Interest and Peace of the World about us, and very much conducing to a strong Union, and a lasting good Correspondence amongst *Christians*;—Not to be ready to yield in such Cases; not to be disposed to comply in such Matters, seems directly contrary to any Desire of Peace and Concord; and therefore must be contrary to *Christian Moderation*. For what Reason can there be against it? Will it do us any Prejudice to have a larger Ground for Union? Is it not a Christian Disposition

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SER M. sometimes to yield even to the unreasonable Humour of Others, and, by somewhat which will do Ourselves no Prejudice, to consult the Good and promote the Agreement of *Christians*? Or is it too great a Condescension, and too noble an Instance of Humility, to be more willing to agree than Others are, and to comply, as far as is reasonable with Them, who will not comply, so far as we think reasonable, with Us? Which of the two is it, that it becomes *Christians* to contend for; Who shall stand most upon their Guard against Union, or who shall step first towards it? Who shall insist most stiffly upon little Punctilios, of none or very small Concern to the main of Religion; or who shall be most disposed to part with things of that Nature, for the sake of what God and their common Saviour love infinitely better? And which of the two sorts of Men will come off at the great Day of Accounts with greater Glory, *They*, who have preferred the Union of the Christian World before their own Humour, or Opinions of little Importance; or *They*, who have absolutely refused to yield up the least or most indifferent Circumstance to that Consideration?

But I shall not enlarge on this any more, nor search out any more Particulars at present, of Christian Moderation. But only observe, from what

what has been said, how unjust and unreasonable that Account is, which is given by many, of this Virtue; by Those only, I mean, who are such Strangers to it themselves, that they cannot bear the least Pretense to it in Others; who would make the World believe, that it proceeds from an Indifference to all Religion, and from a Mind very lukewarm in its Zeal for God: when, in truth, *Christian Moderation* proceeds from a great Zeal for all that deserves it, and a hearty Concern for the Honour of God. Let them, therefore, answer for it to God, and their own Consciences, whoever presume to bring a Disgrace and Contempt upon this Virtue, and those that endeavour to practise it. A moderate Man, who is truly so, values every thing as it deserves, and no farther. And as St. *James* says, that the Wisdom from Above is first *pure*, and then *peaceable*; so, next to his own *Purity*, he has a sacred regard to the Happiness and *Peace* of the World about him. And I see no Reason he has to be ashamed of the Name; or to envy any others a contrary Character.

But I pass on now to the *Second* thing I proposed, *viz.* to mention some proper Arguments to move us heartily to pursue after it, and to possess ourselves of it: For Instance;

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First, If we consider the Peace and Quiet this Virtue includes in it, I mean with respect to the Breast of every private Man, this will inflame us with some Desire to attain it. Compare the Man who is possessed of it, with one that is void of it; the Man who has a Mind ever ready to hear of Peace and Unity, Agreement and Harmony, with the Man who is never in Humour to attend to any thing but what tends to the widening and opening of Wounds and Breaches; the Man who is ever willing to make Allowances for the Mistakes and Faults of Men of different Opinions from himself, with the Man who is always raking in to them, and always eager to represent them in the most inflaming Manner; the Man who is ready to yield up a Thing of little Moment, and many an inconsiderable Point, to obtain Peace, and settle a good Correspondence amongst the several Members of the same Body, with the Man who knows no such thing as Yielding or Compliance, but is rather ready to sacrifice the Universal Peace to his own private Fancies: Compare these two together, and consider in whose Breast most Quiet and Satisfaction is to be found; and it will be no very difficult Matter to determine, whether more Serenity and Happiness of Mind will not always accompany a Disposition inclined to Concord and Unity.

nity, than a Mind always upon the Rack how to inflame and highten Differences; or, always ready to take such Measures as may be most effectual for the keeping alive, or inflaming, the Variances and Animosities in the World. S E R M.
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But, *Secondly*, As this Temper of Mind implies Quiet and Happiness in itself, so it is the most ready, and, I may say, the only Temper, that can, and must at last, heal the evil Dispositions of Mankind; and produce Peace and Happiness in public Societies: which is, I am sure, a good Argument, why every single Person should think himself obliged to pursue after it. In vain are other Methods thought of, and made use of, to join the Hands of Men in Friendship, unless their Hearts be disposed to this candid and compliant Temper. There will always be passionate and wicked Men in the World, to foment the Differences in it. And if none in it will yield one Step; if none will ever bend and comply; what can be hoped for? If the Method taken on all sides be to rail and revile, to aggravate and misrepresent, to search out Faults, and then to make what they please of them; this rather looks like a Declaration of perpetual War against one another, and is in effect a solemn Protestation, that they neither hope for, nor desire, Reconciliation and Peace; and seems to be a firm Resolution of destroying and

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and ruining one another, whenever an Opportunity offers itself. And what a blessed Aspect upon the public Happiness have such Resolutions as these? It may be safely affirmed, that the Men of such Tempers, and such Dispositions, are They, who have, in all Ages, disturbed the Quiet of the World, ruined the Happiness of Societies, and who are ever hindering all Hopes of a better State for the future.

But see if another Scene might not be reasonably hoped for, and That, a Scene of Happiness to the Public, would Men but be persuaded to be as moderate, as yielding, as compliant, as good-natured, as ready to make Allowances, as willing to study the public Advantage (which is public Peace and Agreement) as the Christian Religion obliges them to be. Would not this be visible in its beneficent Influences upon the whole Society? At least, would not this dispose us to live as *Christians* ought to do with *Christians*; and with all Members of the same Civil Society? But enough of *this*.--- I shall mention but one Argument more to move us to endeavour after this Christian Frame of Mind; and that is,

Thirdly, That it is a divine and god-like Temper, an Imitation of God himself, in what ought to

to appear the most amiable Part of his Character in our own Eyes. He never has shewn himself willing to aggravate our Faults beyond the Hope of Pardon ; or indisposed to come to Terms of Accommodation and Peace with his Sinful Creatures. He desires to be united to Us in Love and Friendship, who are at a greater Distance from Him by far, than Those who differ the most from us, can possibly be. He is willing to recede from the strictest Right, and the Rigour of Justice, in order to Our Happiness. And shall not we be willing, and disposed, after so divine a Copy, to yield and bend, in order to meet our Brethren in any Design, that tends to the Foundation or Establishment of a thing of such vast Importance as universal Peace and Happiness? Almighty God himself shews Us, in the most surprising Instance of our Redemption, how much he values the Happiness of his Creatures. It is our Duty to imitate him ; and do every thing in our Power for the compassing the same End : and especially to imitate *Him*, in what he accounts One of his greatest Glories.

I come now to the *Third* thing proposed at first, *i. e.* To lay down some Rules, in order to our obtaining this Christian Temper of Mind.

And,

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And, 1. Let us often consider such Arguments, to move us to the Pursuit after it, as I have before mentioned: How easy, and sedate, and happy, it will make us in the inward State, and the secret Recesses, of our own Minds; how beneficial it will be in its Influences upon the Public; how many Miseries it might have prevented; how many Happinesses it would procure, were it universally practised. Let us then consider of how bad Consequence, and of what wretched Influence the Temper contrary to it must necessarily be, upon Society; what Wrath and Anger, what Malice and Ill-will; what Outrages, and Tumults, and Wars, and Massacres, it has been, and ever will be, the Occasion of: A deep Sense of these, and of the great Duty of imitating God in our Tempers and Practice, will help us in the obtaining and possessing this divine Virtue. And

2. In order to this, it is absolutely necessary that we should free ourselves from Hatred and Malice, Pride and Arrogance. Love and Humility are the proper Road to this Virtue; but Uncharitableness and Pride lead us into Paths quite distinct from, and opposite to it. For the more we love our Neighbour, the more ready shall we be to design and promote his Happiness; and the more desirous and studious we are of that, the more shall we be willing to yield

yield all lesser Points up to it; to comply in any thing of no great Importance, when that demands it. And then, the more humble we are, the less Opinion and Value we set upon Ourselves; the less shall we be sensible of any undervaluing of ourselves by Compliance and Yielding; the more ready shall we be to submit to all good Offices; to recede from what we might, perhaps, in Justice, claim, and to shew a Pattern to all about us, of Moderation and Condescension. But, on the other side if we have conceived, or do nourish, any Prejudices against Men's Persons; if we hate and abhor Men, because they do not fall in with us in all things; or entertain any sort of Ill-will against them; this will make us glad to displease and incense them to heighten their Prejudices already embraced, but is never likely to make us consult their Good at any Time, or prefer it before the least Advantage, or most insignificant Humour, of our own; or to make us solicitous in our Endeavours after a Frame of Mind, which consists in a Readiness to yield and comply, for the sake of our common Good and Happiness.

And therefore, if our Breasts be filled with Pride, with an overweening Conceit of Ourselves, of our own Abilities, and our own Way; if we be too arrogant to hear of any Alteration in Ourselves; if we think it beneath our Dignity to stoop

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SERM. stoop or descend, or to recede from any thing,
 XVII. tho' of never so little Consequence ; we may
 e'en put a stop to our Endeavours after a Vir-
 tue which will dwell only with a Man of an
 humble and yielding Spirit ; and sit down con-
 tented with our own great Acquirements, and
 not think any more of a Temper, which cannot
 possibly reside in a Breast, where Pride and Ar-
 rogance are nourished.

3. It is absolutely necessary, also, that we
 free our Breasts from Covetousness ; Ambition ;
 and All such Designs, as terminate in our own
 private Profit or Honour. For Moderation,
 in a truly Christian Sense, (however the Word
 found in *English*,) is a public-spirited and noble
 Virtue ; and can never be completely and con-
 sistently exercised by a Man, who has proposed
 to himself his own private Gain, or Advance-
 ment, for the End of his Labours. How can He
 be ready and willing to recede one step from his
 own Interest, in order to the universal Good of
 Others, who has fixed his Eye only upon him-
 self ; and thinks *That* only to be good, which
 is a present Profit or Honour to himself ? How
 confined must his Desires and his Designs be ;
 and how little must *He* be moved with a Sense
 of any Advantage to others, who has not left
 any room for such Considerations to come at
 him, but is wholly wrapt up in himself, and his
 own

own Bye-ends? We can never hope to have S E R M.
 our *Moderation*, our yielding and easy Temper XVII.
be known unto all Men; uay, we can never hope
 to have any thing to do with it, 'till we have
 banished all private Ends out of our Hearts;
 at least 'till we have brought them all entirely
 into Subjection to a greater End; and have
 such a Command over Ourselves, as that we
 can make them yield, at any time, to more
 weighty and generous Considerations.

These Rules will help us, if we are sincere
 in the use of them, to form Ourselves into this
 god-like Temper of Mind; and then to pro-
 ceed and improve in it, notwithstanding all
 the Opposition of the violent Part of the
 World.

To conclude with one word proper on this
 Occasion; Had the Men of this Nation been
 universally sensible of the Nature and Obliga-
 tion of this Duty, and possessed it in any
 Degree; the wicked Violences, and Evils,
 of *this* Day, and many both *before*, and af-
 ter it, had not now been called to our Re-
 membrance. I will not enumerate them;
 but rather pray, that the Records of Them,
 in our Histories, may make us, on all sides,
 more in love with true Christian Modera-
 tion: without which (I will be bold to say)
 we can never (in Time to come) be secure a-
 gainst


SERM. gainst the like deplorable Calamities ; nor
XVII. transmit those inestimable Blessings of Religious and Civil Liberty, we at present enjoy, (under the wise Government of Those who appear to know the Value of this Virtue) safe, and unviolated, to future Times : And this, I am sure, ought to be the hearty Endeavour of every *Protestant Englishman*, of what Denomination soever.

SERMON XVIII.

Preached at St. *Swithin's* Church, on *Sept. 2,*
1702, being the Fast-day observed in Re-
membrance of the Fire of *London,* 1666.

LUKE XIX. 41, 42.

*And when he was come near, he beheld the City,
and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known,
even thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things
that belong unto thy Peace ! But now they are
hid from thine Eyes.*

THE City our blessed Lord thus wept SERM.
over, was *Jerusalem*; esteemed, by the XVIII.
Jews, as the Glory of the whole 
Earth. But he wept not over it, as a Collec-
tion of fine Buildings ; but as it was the Capi-
tal City, and principal Resort, of the whole
Jewish Nation ; as it contained in it a vast Num-
ber of that People whom God had chosen out
of the World to be his own : an ungrateful
and rebellious People, that had had all Me-
thods

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SERM. thods tried with them, to make them better
 XVIII. and happier, but could not be reclaimed by
 any ; that had killed and stoned the Prophets
 God had sent to them, and now were going
 to reject and kill his Son ; and so were destined,
 through their own Wickedness, to a great
 and remarkable Ruine and Destruction. The
 Thought and Foresight of this moved the
 Compassion of our Lord, who came to save
 them. *When he was near, He beheld the City ;*
 and that View brought to his Mind those dismal
 Calamities the Inhabitants of it were calling
 down upon themselves : *And he wept over it,*
 expressing his tender Regard to it's Inhabitants
 in this Wish, *If thou hadst known, even thou,*
in this thy Day, i. e. if, in this your last Trial,
 now at this Time when I am sent to You
 with the last Offers of God's Mercy, *the Things*
that belong to thy Peace ! If You, the Inhabitants,
 had understood what is your true and
 real Interest, your Duty and your Happiness !
But now they are hid from thine Eyes, i. e. from
 this Time, If You, the People highly favoured
 of God, are resolved to persist in Infidelity,
 and even to reject Me your long-expected
 Messiah, whom God has sent to you,
 with his last Offers ; there can be no more
 Hopes. God Almighty most justly now
 gives you over, to be led by that perverse
 Spirit

Spirit into Ruine and Destruction. And SERM.
this same thing our blessed Lord sets forth XVIII.
in another Place, in the Parable of the House-
holder, who planted a Vineyard, and let it
out to Husbandmen, and sent several Servants
to receive the Fruits of it for him; and, af-
ter they had been Abused and Murthered,
last of all sent his Son: and when they refus-
ed Obedience to this last and worthiest Messen-
ger, he could send, He resolves to try them no
more, but miserably to destroy those wicked
Men.

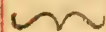
From this Case of the Nation of the *Jews*,
and the City of *Jerusalem*, we are naturally
led to observe these *Three* things :

I. That, according to the constant Repre-
sentations of the Holy Scriptures, there is a
Day appointed for wicked Societies and Na-
tions, 'till which Time Almighty God waits
for their Repentance, and defers their utter
Ruine ; but beyond which, they shall not be
tried.

II. That this is not fixed by Arbitrary Will
and Pleasure, but upon just Reasons : Or, in
other Words, That there is not a Day for the
utter Ruine of any Nation, or Society, so deter-
mined by God, but that, if they repent, and

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amend their Lives, before that Day comes, they shall certainly be pardoned and blessed. And, agreeably to this,

III. That before the final Destruction of any Societies, or Nations, God uses many and sufficient Means of reforming and amending them ; that they may go on to flourish and prosper in the World.

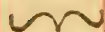
I. We may observe, that there is a Day appointed for wicked Societies and Nations, 'till which Almighty God waits for their Repentance, but beyond which their utter Ruine shall not be deferred.

Thus, We see, in the Passage of the Gospel now before Us, there was a Time beyond which *Jerusalem*, and the whole Nation of the *Jews*, were not to be tried ; and no more Offers of Mercy were to be tendered to them ; but if they did not, at the Coming of the Son of God, repent, and turn from their Evil Ways ; they were, from that Instant, devoted to Misery and Ruine : Or, if They did not, in *this their Day*, *know and practise the Things that belonged to their Peace*, *They would from that Time be hid from their Eyes.*

Thus

Thus it was with the First World ; when their Sins were many and heinous, and the whole Earth was corrupt, *My Spirit*, says God, *shall not always strive with Man* ; I will not ever wait for their Repentance and Amendment ; but their Days shall be an Hundred and Twenty Years. (*Gen. vi. 3.*) So long, and no longer, the Men of that World were to be waited on ; and then a Flood of Waters to be brought in upon them, if they continued ungodly. Thus we see, tho' the Posterity of *Abraham* were by Promise to possess the Land of the *Amorites*, yet it was not to be, *till the Iniquity of the Amorites was full* (*Gen. xv. 16.*) 'till they had been tried to the utmost, and were found to be fit for nothing but a signal Destruction. Now these Things that were written before, were written for our Instruction, and these Things happened unto them for Examples. And we may argue, that, as there was a Pitch of Wickedness, beyond which God would not let these Societies of Men go on, without a remarkable Vengeance ; and as there was a Day certainly set, beyond which they should not be tried, and after which no farther Offers should be made for their Reformation and Happiness : so it is with Us Ourselves, with this Nation and People to which we belong ; So certainly, there is a determinate

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Highth of Wickedness, beyond which God will not bear with us ; and a Day, in the Purpose of Almighty God, beyond which he will not try us, and after which nothing shall prevent our utter Desolation and Ruine.

II. We may observe, that, according to the Representations of the same *Holy Scriptures*, There is not a Day for the final Ruine of any Nations or Societies, so determined by God, but that, if they repent, before that Time come, they shall certainly be pardoned, and blessed with Prosperity and Success. Thus *Noah* was to preach Repentance and Righteousness to the World before the Flood, in order to prevent that great Calamity ; and an Hundred and twenty Years were given, to try if they would hear his Voice and live. Thus *Jonas* was ordered by God to go to *Nineveh*, and cry aloud in it, yet *Forty Days*, and *Nineveh* shall be overthrown ; and yet, when all the People of that City joined together to humble themselves before God, and God saw their Works, that they turned from their evil Ways, God repented of the Evil he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not. Thus, without doubt, he would have done with the *Jews* ; if they had repented and seen the Things that belonged to their Peace

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in that their Day, which was destined to be their last Trial: if, instead of rejecting the Lord of Life, they had accepted his Offers, and become his Subjects and Servants; all their stoning and killing the Prophets, that had been sent before, and all their numberless past Provocations, would have been pardoned and forgotten.

For that this was the Method in which He would always proceed, He himself had assured the Jews by his Prophet *Jeremiah* (xviii. 7.) *At what Instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil Ways, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them, i. e. I will not do it, tho' I have threatned it in Words of the most peremptory, and absolute, Sort. If Repentance intervene, the Evil shall never be executed; and it is threatned, upon Supposition only that a Repentance does not follow upon such Threatning. And this is a very considerable Satisfaction, that we have not to do with an arbitrary and unreasonable Tyrant, but one who desires and wishes our Repentance; who threatens Ruine, in order to bring a Nation to Repentance and Amendment; and who does not threaten it, in order to execute it, if Re-*

SER M. penitance and Amendment follow. *Turn ye,*
 XVIII. *turn ye; why will ye die, O House of Israel?*



And thus he speaks not only to Them, but to all Nations and Societies: *Turn ye from your evil Ways, and so Iniquity shall not be your Ruine.* But,

III. We are led, by the Case before Us of *Jerusalem*, and the *Jewish* Nation, to observe, That, before the final Ruine of any Nation or Society, God uses many and sufficient Means to reform and amend them: *How often*, says our Lord to *Jerusalem*, *would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings; and Ye would not?* How many Prophets were sent, with mighty Signs and Wonders, to allarm this People of the *Jews*? how many wise Men to guide and instruct them? With how immediate and special a Regard did God himself dwell amongst them and preside over them? How many extraordinary and miraculous Mercies, Deliverances, and Victories, were they blessed with? And, because that Method was unsuccessful, how many Plagues and Judgments, Famines, Swords, and Pestilences, did they experience? And, after they had been Proof against Instruction, against Mercies, and Judgments, and all other Efforts of his Good-will, *last of all*
be

he sent unto them his Son, with all the Signs, and Miracles, and Evidences, of the promised Messiah; in order, at the very Approach of the End of his Forbearance, to prevent their Ruine by their Amendment. Almighty God himself gives an Account, in the *Fifth Chap. of Iſaiab*, what he had done to his Vineyard. *And now, says he, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and my Vineyard; what could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* And this is a plain Demonstration of his Mercy, and Long-suffering, that, altho' he must, in Justice, and lest Virtue should perish from off the Earth, sometimes decree the utter Ruine and Desolation of a People; yet, before that, he tries many and different Methods to bring them to Reformation: A certain Proof, I say, that he delights not in their Ruine; that *Judgment is his strange Work*, in this Sense, that it is not what by Choice He inclines to: Nay, that, before a Nation be totally destroyed, it must be past even the Possibility of Recovering, by those Methods in which God thinks fit to deal with such Creatures as We are.

Having gone over those *Three Observations* I proposed at first, it will not be improper to consider

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consider *two Questions*, which offer themselves upon this Subject. The *first* is, why whole Societies and Nations are often punished so remarkably in this World? And the *other* is, why *good Men* often suffer in those Calamities and Destructions, which are brought on a People for the Wickedness of others?

First, Why whole Societies and Nations of Men are punished often, in so remarkable a Manner, in this World. And the plain Reasons seem to me to be these two. 1. Because when once a whole Society, or Nation, is universally corrupt and debauched, Virtue must necessarily, and infallibly, perish from amongst the Men of that Society or Nation; and, Secondly, that this Destruction may be an Example to all other Societies. As to the first, the Corruption of a whole Nation is not like the Corruption of a particular Person; which may be let alone, and yet the Cause of Virtue and Goodness not run so very low, but that there may be Encouragement enough left to others to be religious and good: but it is of so very bad Consequence, that there is not the least Probability, if it be not restrained and checked, by some extraordinary Methods, that Virtue should ever shew its Head again in that Nation. The Examples in such a Society are
bad;

bad; the Education of Youth directly leading to Vice and Debauchery; the Principles upon which Men act apparently wicked, and tending on still to greater and greater Degrees of Wickedness. Now God, as he is holy, and of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity opposing itself to those Rules, He himself acts, and would have all others act, by; as He is the Governor and Judge of the World; is concerned to hinder, by all possible Methods, such an universal Wickedness as would ruine Virtue, so that it should have no Hopes of ever appearing again. And this is a sufficient Reason why he should use Judgments and Calamities, as well as Mercies, to prevent such an Increase of it in a Nation: and, if those lesser Methods are not successful, why he should bring utter Ruine and Desolation upon that whole Nation. Especially considering,

2. What a moving Example this may be to other Societies and Nations. Precedents, or Examples, are apt to influence our Minds very much: And to see how other Societies of People have been lost and ruined, when they refused to be reformed by milder Methods, naturally leads us to think how it must fare at last with Ourselves, if we go on. For
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the Question presently offers itself to our Minds, what Reason is there why We should Hope to be excepted? or, if we imitate other incorrigible Nations, in our Manners and Behaviour, why should We not resemble them in a remarkable and fatal End? Almighty God may therefore, justly punish wicked Societies, or Nations, to affright them from going on to a State of universal, settled, unrestrained Wickedness; and, if that cannot be done, may punish them with an utter Destruction, rather than permit such universal Wickedness to triumph and flourish, or suffer a Foundation to be laid for an uninterrupted Course of it. For this is exactly agreeable to the Rules of his Supreme Moral Government: as it is absolutely necessary to the maintaining the World in any tolerable Order, and consulting the Happiness of other Societies, and of those Persons that shall be born after, who will be alarmed by these Examples, to fly from what has before brought down Ruine upon whole Nations. *When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness,* says the Prophet. When there is a remarkable Visitation, a visible Punishment of the Sins of any Nation; this will draw the Eyes of others, and teach them, that Righteousness is the only
sure

sure Way to establish the Happiness of a People. For if, (as Solomon says) *because Sentence against any one evil Work, is not speedily executed, therefore the Hearts of the Sons of Men are fully set in them to do Evil*; Certainly, if Sentence were never executed in this World against the great and repeated evil Works, of which a whole Body of Men are notoriously and universally guilty, much more would the Hearts of the Sons of Men be set in them to do Evil; when They have Reason to think themselves secure; and so all Religion and Virtue would, by Degrees, long ago have vanished from the Earth. These two Reasons seem fully sufficient to satisfy us, why God should often punish, and sometimes totally destroy, Societies and Nations of Men.

There is another Reason, why wicked Societies and Nations should be punished in *this* World, mentioned by Some, *viz.* because they cannot be punished, *as Societies*, in the World to come. But this I do not urge, because I either do not understand it; or do not understand it to be a good Reason: and because the Reasons I mentioned before seem to be fully sufficient, without inquiring after any others.

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I come now to another Question, which has sometimes been asked upon this Subject, *viz.* Why good Men often suffer in those Calamities, and Destructions, which are brought on any Society, or Nation, for the Sins of others? And as to this, supposing the Fact true,

I. We may observe, that good Men have often very great Imprudences and Weaknesses: and these may, sometimes, naturally tend to help on public Calamities and Misfortunes.

Some of the best of them may be Men of great natural Passions, hurrying them on to sudden Resolutions, and Counsels; and at the same Time of so little Reach, as to be easily mistaken in their political Conduct; and think *That* to be good for the repairing the Breaches of a Nation, which will really help to widen them; and *That* for the Interest and Happiness of a People, which really tends to their Ruine and Unhappiness. Almighty God is not obliged to free the Minds of good Men from all Failings, or to conquer their Passions miraculously, for them; or to give their Minds such a Reach, as that they shall not mistake in their Notions of public Interest and Happiness; and they may justly suffer in those temporal Evils which they themselves

selves thus help to bring upon their Country. SERM.
But XVIII.

2. There may be many good Men, unexceptionable in their private and personal Conduct, who think it sufficient to look after themselves, and are too little concerned at seeing their Country over-run with Wickedness, to use their Endeavours to give a Check to it, or to put in Execution the best Laws made against the Progress of That which tends to the final Ruine of a Nation. The Instances before mentioned, from the sacred History, would teach them another Lesson. *Noah* was preserved from the general Flood : but then, he not only was a good Man himself, but had Zeal enough to make him concern himself for other People, and even to be troublesome to them, by being a *Preacher of Righteousness*, (as *St. Peter* says) in order to reclaim them, and prevent that Ruine that threatened them. So *Lot* was delivered, when *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were consumed ; but then, he was not only righteous himself, but *St. Peter* observes, that *That righteous Man dwelling amongst them, in seeing and bearing vexed his righteous Soul, from Day to Day, with their unlawful Deeds ;* nay, interested himself so much in their Behaviour, as not only to be grieved at their Impieties, but, without doubt, to endeavour their Reformation :

SERM. mation : For so much we gather with great
 XVIII. Reason, from that Speech of the Inhabitants of
 ~~~~~ Sodom, *This one Fellow came in to sojourn, and  
 he will needs be a judge,* Gen. xiv. 9.

In these Cases, therefore, in which the un-  
 active Coldness of some, or the weak Under-  
 standings, or strong Passions, of other, good  
 Men, have naturally tended, and led to the  
 Ruine of that Society to which they belong ;  
 they themselves cannot think Almighty God  
 to act unjustly by them, if he does not mira-  
 culously exempt them, from the common Lot  
 in such Calamities, as may indeed justly be said  
 to be brought upon their Country for the sake  
 of the *Wickedness* of Others, but yet are such  
 as these good Men themselves did not endeavour  
 to prevent by their Zeal and Interposition ; or  
 perhaps helped forward by the Imprudence of  
 their Counsels, or Violence of their natural  
 Tempers. But,

3. It will take away the very Ground of  
 this Objection, to observe that, according to  
 the Representations of the Scriptures, the Fact  
 itself is not certainly true. We all know that  
 the same Holy Books, which relate the Sto-  
 ries of the Desolation of Cities and Na-  
 tions, for the Wickedness of the People, give  
 us Instances of good Men wonderfully preserv-  
 ed, and delivered, in such Calamities. Thus,  
 when

when the Old World was to be destroyed, we find *Noah*, a good and righteous Person, who had never either assented to, or winked at, the Wickedness of those about him, strangely delivered by the Particular Providence of God, when the Flood was brought upon the World of the Ungodly.

Thus, when the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were turned into Ashes, and condemned with an *Overtbrow*, just *Lot*, who was vexed with the filthy Conversation of the Wicked; who abhorred their Deeds, and was righteous in Opposition to all their Examples, was delivered and sent away from that fiery Destruction. These are taken notice of by *St. Peter*, as a sufficient Foundation to ground this Consequence upon, *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly*, (2 Pet. ii. 9.) Nay, Almighty God seems himself by the Prophet *Ezekiel* (Chap. xiv. 12, &c.) to give such good and holy Persons (under the Names of *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*,) a Title to such a Deliverance: in this Case of the extraordinary Punishment of a Society, by the Hand of God, expressly for the Sins of the wicked Part of it; repeating this often, that tho' they should not deliver any other Persons, yet they should deliver their own Souls, by their Righteousness.

And indeed, it seems agreeable to Reason,

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and Equity, that, in those Cases, in which it pleases Almighty God thus immediately to interpose, and bring immediate Desolation upon any Society, for the sake of the Wickedness of Many of the Men who compose it; That, I say, in such Cases, the *truly Good Men* belonging to it should be preserved and delivered. Otherwise, these Calamities could not well be said to be decreed, or wrought, by God himself, for the Punishment of such Wickedness only.

And this appears plainly to be the very Foundation and Strength of *Abraham's* Argument, in the Eighteenth Chapter of *Genesis*. There we find, at the 20<sup>th</sup> Verse, That God is said to condescend to inform *Abraham* of his Resolution with regard to *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, which, it is plain from *Abraham's* Answer, was a Declaration, that He would himself interpose, and bring a total Destruction upon those Cities, solely on account of the enormous Wickedness of the Inhabitants. This was the Fact, which moved *Abraham* to the Boldness of Arguing with God himself, upon the Principles of Justice and Equity, from Verse 23, to the End. *Wilt Thou also destroy the Righteous with the Wicked—That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the Righteous with the Wicked; and that the Righteous should be as the Wicked; That*

*That be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* This is his Argument, Since this Destruction is to be brought upon these Places for the Sins of the Wicked only, strict Justice requires that the righteous Part of the People should not be destroyed for the Wickedness of Others, for the sake of which alone the Destruction is brought. *Abraham's* main Intention is not to intercede for Those whose *Iniquities were full*; but to contend, from the Nature of Justice, and of God himself, That a Method ought to be found for the Preservation of the Righteous, in such a particular Case. And we see, the Great God is so far from being displeased with a Mortal Man for pretending to argue with him, from such excellent Principles; that He plainly approves of the Argument, and goes so far as to declare, That, rather than the Righteous shall not be preserved, He will, for their Sakes, if a Few be found, spare the City, and even put off the Destruction of the Wicked, now ripe for his Vengeance. And, as it appears that there was but one good Man and Family there; This one Man and Family alone are preserved. And thus we see, that it is the Representation of Holy Scripture, that Good Men are actually delivered, and preserved, according to the Rules of Justice, by that God, that Righteous Judge of

SERM.  
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SERM. the Earth, in those Desolations and Destructions, which He himself immediately brings  
 XVIII. upon a People, expressly and merely on account of the crying Wickedness, of the Worst Part of them. And this is the Case particularly meant in the Objection. For,

4. As for Those Destructive, or Calamitous Events, apparently arising from the Original Frame and Contexture of this Earth, or of the Air around it; or from the Imperfections, Weaknesses, and Wickedness of Men themselves, the Inhabitants of this Earth; or from any the like Causes; the Good Part of Mankind, (the Best of whom have many Imperfections, and are placed Here, only as in a Country, designed not for a Paradise, or their Heaven, but for a State of Probation, suitable to the Ends proposed by their Maker,) ought not to complain, that They partake with the Wicked in such sort of Evils, natural to this State. Nor do the Justice and Equity of God's Government need any Vindication, on account of Good Men suffering with the Wicked, in these and the like common Calamities of Nature, any more than They do, on account of his not exempting the Best of Men from the common Lot of Sickness, and even Death itself, pronounced and executed equally upon the

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the Bad and the Good, the Just Man and the Sinner, in this World.

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This is all that I can presume to offer concerning the Case of good Men's suffering, in Calamities brought upon any Nation, for the Sins of Others : And if what I have said upon so dark a Subject, not entirely laid open to our Capacities, cannot fully answer the *Curiosity* of Some, or the honest Desire of Satisfaction in Others, yet it seems sufficient to abate the Force of the Objection ; and to give Them some ground to think, that there may be still stronger Reasons, in the Counsels of the All-knowing God, for this Method of proceeding with the Best, as well as Worst, Part of his imperfect Creatures, in this present State of Things.

Having thus gone over the Three principal Points I first propos'd ; and then consider'd *Two Difficulties*, arising upon Them ; I will only now make a short Application of all to Ourselves, and our own Nation.

If it appears from what has been said, That Success and Prosperity have, by the Command and Laws of the Great Governour of the World, attended upon Families, and Nations, where Religion and Virtue have been encouraged and practis'd ; we may conclude, that the same will wait upon Us, if Religion and Virtue are

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encouraged and practised amongst us. If we read that his Wrath has been executed, and remarkable Vengeance taken, upon Nations in which Impiety and Immorality have been triumphant; we may be certain, that Desolation and Destruction is appointed for Us, if Impiety and Debauchery triumph in the same manner amongst us. And, to be more particular, As We find by the Words upon which I have been discoursing, and other Passages of the Gospel, that the Nation of the *Jews*, in our Saviour's Time, were called upon to cast back their Eyes upon all the Trials God had formerly made of them, and all the Methods He had used to amend them; not only by his Prophets, but by all his Mercies, and all his Judgments: and were plainly told, that, after all the ungrateful Returns made by them, God would not strive with them much longer; but that, if they did not truly repent, and receive their Messiah, the Day of Destruction was soon to come upon them: so, We of this Nation may find too much Reason to think that That Day is not at any very great Distance from us, beyond which God will not try us, or bear with us; I mean, if we consider how many Methods he has used to awaken us, and how little we have hitherto been alarmed, to any good Purpose of Amendment: how many Happineſſes and Mercies

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cies He has favoured us with, as a Nation — Placed Us in a Situation, and in Circumstances which point out to Us all Opportunities imaginable of being a great and flourishing People ; — Made us the Subjects of a Power governed by Laws, and not of Arbitrary and Unbounded Tyranny ; often delivered our Liberties and Lives from imminent Ruine, and our Happiness from the very Jaws of Destruction ; — Called us to the Knowledge of his *Gospel* (a Mercy which we can never duely value) not as it was hid, and obscured, and made useless, by ignorant and wicked Men, but, by his Providence, restored to Light, so far, as to lie open to All, in that Native Simplicity and Purity, in which his first Followers preached, and wrote it, for the Use of All. And, to engage us the more to it, He himself has made This happy Condition of Ours so much his Care, that no Attempts hitherto against it have prospered, but all have been wonderfully defeated. And then We may go on to consider, That, as Mercies have not been wanting to draw us, so neither have Judgments to alarm and drive Us of this Generation to Amendment. It is not very long since all was Confusion and Disorder ; since the Sword of Civil Fury was dyed in Blood and Slaughter ; nor much less Time since a fatal Pestilence raged amongst Us, and



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a terrible *Fire* laid waste this City. Now, if we reflect on all these, we must think, either that we are amended and reformed so much as to turn away God's Displeasure; or else, that the Day for Ruine and Destruction cannot be at a very great Distance, unless we do very soon and very seriously prevent it, by forsaking our Vices, and turning to Him in Holiness and Righteousness of Life. For thus We should call to Remembrance, He has dealt with the Nations of old; and particularly, with his chosen People, the People of *Israel*. And therefore, We should argue, in this same Manner, and these same Methods, will He deal with us, in the future Dispensations of his Mercy, or of his Wrath.

The Thoughts, which I have now pointed out, will, in their natural Tendency, lead us all most heartily to endeavour to amend our own Lives, and to do what in Us lies to discourage, and put a stop to, the open Wickedness of Others; and so to consult our own Interest and Happiness, in the Prosperity and Happiness of that Nation, and Society, of which we are Members. And, as what I have now offered cannot but be thought very seasonable upon the Occasion, which has at this Time brought Us together; so, let me add, with regard to our present publick Circumstances; that such Considerations

considerations can never be more seasonable, than S E R M.  
at a Time, when a Torrent of open Wicked- XVIII.  
ness, and Shameful Divisions at *Home*, and a  
Powerful Enemy *Abroad*, seem to conspire to  
open the Way, to the Ruine of all that is dear  
to Us, as *Englishmen*, and *Protestants*. 

God grant, *We may know, even We, in this*  
*our Day, the Things that belong to our Peace ;*  
and all of Us act according to what *We see*  
to be our Duty, and our *Interest !*

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# S E R M O N XIX.

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Preached at *St. Peter's Poor*, March 8, 1708-9,  
being the Anniversary of the Queen's Ac-  
cession, &c.

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I TIM. ii. 1, 2.

*I exhort therefore, that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, be made for all Men : for Kings, and for all that are in Authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.*

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**T**HESE Words are a Direction to *Ti-mothy*, who had the Care and Over-sight both of Pastors and People, in the Parts about *Ephesus*; and they relate to the public Prayers of *Christian* Congregations: exhorting, that they should extend their Charity to the whole World, by recommending all Mankind to the Favour of Almighty God; particularly, that they should pray, and give Thanks, for Kings, and all that were in Au-  
thority,

thority, or as the Margin expresses it, nearer SER M.  
to the Original, *in eminent Place*; for All whom XIX.  
the Providence of God has raised to any Degree  
of Power; that they should pray for all such,  
that *Christians* might lead a quiet and peace-  
able Life under them, in all Godliness and Ho-  
nesty. Which last Words are either designed  
to direct them what should be the Matter of  
their Prayers; or else to express one End which  
he proposed by *Christians* thus publicly pray-  
ing for All in Authority, or Eminence; *viz.*  
that these Persons in Power might be induced  
by this to be favourable to them, or, at least  
not to treat them as Enemies. If they be un-  
derstood the first Way, the Direction is, That  
they should pray for all in Eminence, to this  
Effect, that God would be pleased so to dis-  
pose their Hearts, that They might so use  
their Power, as that so good Men, and Pro-  
fessors of so holy a Religion, as the *Chris-*  
*tians*, might be safe and secure under them;  
that they might be Terrors only to Evil-do-  
ers, and a Praise and Safeguard to them that  
do well. If they be understood in the latter  
Sense, as one End proposed by St. *Paul*, why  
*Christians* should at that Time particularly pray  
for all in high Stations, the Meaning of them  
will be this, That he would have them pray  
for their Superiours and Governours, not only  
because



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because it was their Duty, but because it was their Interest; to the End that those Men in Power might be induced, when they knew that *Christians* did heartily pray for them, to use them as Friends; to permit them to lead quiet and peaceable Lives, and not to persecute and harraßs them as Enemies; that so the Church might have Peace and Encouragement by means of the powerful Men of the World, when they should find that *Christianity* was no Enemy to them, or their Government, but was likely to be a great Support to it, by its Prayers and Intercessions for them.

Both these Ways may the Words, I think, be understood; tho' I rather think, that *St. Paul* might have the latter in his Eye, at a Time when *Christianity* was furrounded with Enemies; and perpetual Persecution was very likely to be its Fate, from the Notion that they had entertained, of its disposing Men to be of turbulent, and troublesome, and ungovernable Tempers; or that, being wholly taken up with the Thoughts of another State of Happiness to come hereafter, they might be entirely disregardful of the Interest and Good of Human Society below.

My Design is not to insist upon these Words as they may peculiarly belong to the first *Christians*, furrounded by Enemies, looked upon with

with a jealous Eye by Princes and Men in Power, and continually liable to the Frowns of all around them; but to consider them with a more general View, as they may be applied, and very reasonably supposed to be directed, to all *Christians*, in all Ages, under all Forms of Government: and to Ourselves in particular, under an excellent Form of Government, and an excellent QUEEN, who, as this Day, by the Providence of God, succeeded to the Crown, and Glory, of her Illustrious Predecessor.

Only before I proceed, I cannot forbear remarking, how eager some Men are to catch at any thing that may impose a Yoke of Bondage upon Themselves and their Neighbours, when they lay hold on such a Text as this; and argue from St. *Paul's* commanding *Christians* to pray for all in Eminence, or Power, that he commanded them, in this, to be wholly passive, at all Times, and in all Circumstances, under all possible ill Usage, even under such Administrations as must ruine the whole public Society, as well as themselves; nay, farther, that they should pray for Prosperity to Those in Power, in all their violent Attempts, and all their Undertakings of all Sorts. But, in one word, they may as well argue, from our being commanded to pray for our Enemies, or from our being commanded to pray  
for

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for all Men here in the Text, that we are therefore obliged to wish them well in all their unjust Attempts against Ourselves; nay, in all their contradictory Designs against one another; to submit our Necks, our Families, our worldly Concerns, to the Insults and the Devastation of any who will be so hardy as to attack us, and to attempt our Ruine. And if some of the primitive *Christians* do, in their Apologies, declare to the Emperours, in absolute Terms, and without any Exceptions, that They pray for their Happiness and Success; it must be said, that they could mean this in no Sense pleasing to Almighty God, but in this, that they might be prospered and find Success in all their lawful and honourable Enterprizes; or else, if They meant this, in any other Sense, that these *Christians*, who were fallible Men, mistook the Nature of their Duty; and put up Prayers very unacceptable to the great Fountain of Good, and Lover of That only which is ever Just and Right.

To prosecute my present Design, it will be proper,

*First*, to consider the Importance and Burthen of Government; together with the unspeakable Benefit of good Government; from which,

*Secondly*, We may easily see, both the Need there

there is of the heartiest united Prayers of the governed Society, in the Behalf of Governours; and likewise, what must be the chief Matter of these Prayers, as well as of their Thanksgivings, plainly pointed out in those Words, *That we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty.*

After which, there will not need many Words to apply what shall have been said, to the present Occasion of our meeting together; and the Blessings which this Day has continued and confirmed to us.

*First,* The Importance and Burthen of Government deserves to be spoken to, together with the unspeakable and extensive Benefit of good Government. Were one to judge of Matters by mere Outside and Shew; or, were one to form his Sentiments, concerning Objects, by the Zeal that Poor Mortals shew to obtain them, one would think a State of Power, and Riches, (which are the Sinews of Power,) to be the most lovely and desirable State in the World; made up of nothing but most agreeable Amusements, or magnificent Scenes of all that is desirable.

Through how much Blood, and at the Expence of how many Thousand Lives, will a Man, fired by Ambition, seek after a Crown that is to be purchased at any rate; and think  
per-



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perhaps, all the while, that he is in Pursuit of one of the most agreeable Stations this World can shew? And how eager will the Contention often be, even where one would think Men have had enough of their own Power before, and felt enough of the Weight of Government? But, there being something gawdy and great in outward Appearance, the Senses of Men are more taken up with the Outside, than their Reason and Consideration are with what is within. For, alas! if the Matter be laid open, how many Thorns grow inwards? how many Cares, and Fears, and Anxieties, must molest, even one, who is but little solicitous about the good Estate of those under him? How many Enmities must he encounter, how many Parties must he steer between, how many Applications must he endure? how many Jealousies must he entertain, of every Thing, and every Body? especially if he knows himself rather to be an Enemy, than a Friend, to his People?

But I speak not merely of this. Put the Case, that the true End of Government be constantly in the View of the Governour, and that it is his sincere Intention to consult the Good and Interest of the Governed; what a laborious, what an uninterrupted Course of Cares and Anxieties? what a Burthen of never-ceasing Thought, (the Labour of the Mind,) doth

doth this imply in it? To guard against the evil Designs of Flatterers, and artful Courtiers; against those who press for high Stations, in order to hinder the good Influences of better Men above them, and only to answer their own private Ends; to combat the Enmity and Opposition of those who dislike every thing that is truly good, and never put more Impediments in the Way of Governors, than when they are truly in the Interest of the People under them: To see with the Eyes of others, and yet to see Things in their true Colours; to hear with the Ears of Others, and yet not to be deceived; to penetrate into the dark Recesses of the Breast of Others; to be Proof against Vain, and Empty, and Extravagant Complements, and to be armed against rough and unmannerly Contradiction: To know what is the true Interest of a People, in every considerable Branch, to have Courage enough to profess this to be their own; to have Conduct enough to prosecute it in the wisest Methods; and Hardiness to adhere to it, against all the deluding Offers, and all the boldest Threats, to the contrary: To do Justice impartially, and yet to exercise Mercy in due Time and Place: What shall I say? To act the Part of a God in the World, by Beneficence and Goodness; to protect the Injured, to defend the Op-

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pressed, and to be ever prepared for all Occasions of doing good.



This is the Part of Governors, the Part of all who are possessed of Civil Power, in their several Places and Stations. And is not this a Burthen that requires God's Assistance; a Burthen for more than human Abilities? But how excellent in its Use, and how beneficial, when this Burthen is borne, and this Office executed, by Such as are not taken with the external Title and Appearance, but regard the internal Parts of it, and its true Design! how doth the benign Influence descend from the Head down to the lowest Parts of the Body? Mutual Love, Rest, Quiet, Security, in all their Concerns; These and many more Goods, are owing to the Fountain above, from whence they flow in mighty and useful Streams. On the contrary, when all this internal Part of Government is disregarded, and only the external Grandeur aimed at, and carried to an Excess of Highth by a Governor, how doth the Malignity of this spread itself over a Country? Uneasiness, and Misery, and every evil Work, is the Effect; and Nothing good to be depended upon; but every Thing that is valuable or delightful, to be sacrificed to Humour and Passion!

Let

Let us, therefore, *Secondly*, learn from hence SER M.  
how much it concerns us, and our Governors, XIX.  
that we heartily and fervently put up our  
Prayers to God, for Them; that this laborious  
and invidious Task may be made light and  
easy, thro' the kind Dispositions of his Provi-  
dence, to all such as truly design his Glory,  
and the Good of those over whom they are  
placed. For indeed, his fatherly Eye, and  
friendly Concurrence, seem more necessary in  
*This*, than in any other secular Work what-  
soever: as it is evident that in *This*, the Hap-  
piness, or Misery, of whole Nations, and of the  
Children yet unborn, are highly concerned.

And hence we shall be naturally led to see,  
what the Matter, and chief Subject, of our  
Prayers, should be. For Instance, that, thro'  
the kind Dispositions of Providence, it may  
not be in the Power of evil-minded Men to  
disturb the Reign, or obstruct the Manage-  
ment, of such Rulers as are indeed a Terror  
to evil Works, and a Praise to them that do  
well; that they may have Eyes perpetually  
open to see, and Ears perpetually disposed to  
hear, what is for the common and universal  
Interest; that they may have Hearts armed  
against every thing that can hinder the Prose-  
cution of it, and Courage and Conduct to make  
Government as useful as God Almighty de-



S E R M. signed it should be: That every thing may be  
 XIX. proposed and passed into Laws, that may establish Peace and Righteousness upon a lasting Foundation; and build up such a Structure of Public Virtue and Happiness, as no Time may be able to demolish, nor any Attempts to ruine.

To these Subjects of our Prayers, the Importance, the Burthen, the Nature, and the End of their Office direct us.

For their temporal Prosperity and Success we must frame our serious Wishes, and adapt our Prayers, so as to make them agreeable in all Respects, to the Will of God: and this can be only done effectually, by praying to God, that They may be successful in all such Designs and Endeavours as are approved of by him; as are just, honourable, reasonable, fitting, and becoming: all beyond this being little less than Blasphemy. To pray to God that any Persons may have Success in Works which He hates and abhors; in the Works of that evil Spirit which is always represented as the greatest Enemy to his Will; is to affront and anger Him. The Gospel of *Christ* knows no such Duty as this. Tho' the Duty of Prayer for *Governors* be laid down in general Terms; yet common Sense, and the Commands of God in other Cases, must regulate and bring this into due Form.



Form. Suppose all the Mariners and Passengers, in a Ship, were commanded to pray for their Pilot, and for his Success, in general Terms; could any one argue from hence, that they are obliged to pray for Success to him, even when he is endeavouring to split the Ship upon a Rock, to dash it into a thousand Pieces, and destroy the Life of every one in it? Or, Would not every one understand such a general Expression to imply in it only an Obligation to such Prayer as is suitable to the Nature and End of his Office, the preserving the Ship, and bringing it safe into Port?

So, in the Case of Thanksgiving, if that were likewise enjoined; could any Man be so absurd as to say, that those Passengers, who saw this Danger evidently, and the evil Design of this Pilot, were yet obliged to bless God for such a Pilot, who was just going, evidently, to dash them against a Rock, and to destroy both their Goods and their Lives?

Besides, if the *Christian* Religion can be supposed to enjoin either Prayer, or Thanksgiving, in so unlimited a Manner; then must it be supposed, that the *Christians* of several Countries must be obliged in Duty to pray to God for the most contradictory things in Nature: one Part, that he will please to prosper Tyranny and Oppression; another Part, that he will be pleased

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to give Success to Justice, and prosper the best of Administrations ; which it is highly absurd to fix upon the *Christian* Institution. Can those Subjects of any Monarch, in Countries abroad, for instance, who groan under his Oppression and his exorbitant Demands, for the sake of what they themselves may think unjust Attempts of Force and War upon Others ; can such *Christian* Subjects, I say, be obliged by the *Gospel* to pray for his outward Prosperity in all his Undertakings ? This cannot be the Duty of such unhappy Subjects. We of this Nation, indeed, feel the Sweets of good Government, and know what it is to be engaged in a righteous Cause ; and therefore, are obliged to pray for Success to our Sovereign, whom we willingly obey, and of whose Administration we are so gratefully sensible, and of whose Justice in the Cause She publickly maintains in *Europe*, we are so perfectly satisfied. This is the Difference between Us and Others. And, as it is impossible that Contradictions should be true ; it is impossible that the Duty of *Christians*, in several Places, should be so absolutely contradictory of itself. No, our Prayers and Thanksgivings must be agreeable to God's Will. We must not pray to him to prosper Wickedness, even in high Places : nor must we thank him, as for temporal Blessings, for the Victories of Tyranny. For this is to thank

Him,

Him, for what is, in truth, one of the greatest CURSES that even his Almighty Power can send down upon any Nation. A Curse, which some Nations Abroad may either labour against, or thank God for, according as their Hearts and Dispositions have been preserved in their natural State ; or by continual Oppression, and the Custom of Injury and Insult, are become callous and totally insensible. For our Parts, we know no such Sentiment ; and therefore cannot, without Blasphemy, think, that the Success of Power, sporting itself in the Miseries of Those around it, can be any Subject for Thanksgiving to the great Governor of the World ; who wishes Happiness to all Civil Societies, and expects from their Rulers, a constant Attention to that Happiness, for which they were set over their People.

The *Third* Particular proposed was this, Supposing that the Subject of our Prayers be granted, or that it pleases God to give us that uncommon Blessing of good and just Government over us ; what our Behaviour, under a Sense of this, ought to be ; and what Use we ought to make of so great an Happiness. These are particularly pointed out to us in the last Words of the Text, *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.*



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*First*, This is the very End proposed by the *Apostle*, in these *Intercessions* which he recommends for *Kings*, and all others in Authority; that, shewing Ourselves thus their sincere Friends and Well-wishers, we may, under them, enjoy an undisturbed Repose, and a State of Quiet, which we could not so well hope for, if we did not give them this Testimony of our Affection and Good-will. This is as great an Happiness, as the Condition of Men in this World allows to any Society; to enjoy, under the Protection of Power, lodged in good Hands, and exercised in the Manner, and to the End for which alone it was appointed, the Comforts, and Conveniences of Life, as well as Necessaries; to reap the Fruits of their own Labours, and possess their own Acquisitions and Inheritances, without the continual Dread of Violence, and Arbitrary Rage, tearing them away and consuming them all. An Happiness, which we of this Part of the World, at this Time, may be said peculiarly to enjoy, whilst we may view, at a great Distance, the Storms and Tempests which beat upon others; and the Exercise of all Power by military Force, to the utter Ruine of the Quiet and Repose of their Lives, and of the peaceful Enjoyment of what they have at least as strict a Right to enjoy securely, as their Governors have to rule over them. And hence indeed,

deed, will appear our peculiar great Concern in these Expressions. For if we are so peculiarly happy, as that our Governors watch over us, and rule us by Laws made and known by Ourselves; and make our peaceable Possession of what is our own, as secure as this World admits of; we must be void of all Sense, and abandoned of all Understanding, to be Ourselves the Troublers of our own calm and smooth Waters; and, by unreasonable and undeserved Noise and Disquiet, to break in upon such a happy Scene of public Serenity, as can alone give a Relish to all the Goods of the Earth, and alone secure the Happiness of Ourselves, and Families, and Posterity, in it. But,

*Secondly*, There is something farther added by the *Apostle*, in his Description of the Conduct of *Christians*, under the Sense of the great Blessing of a good and beneficent Government. They must not only lead *quiet and peaceable Lives*, but must lead their Lives *in all Godliness, and Honesty*. Religion and Piety towards God, and Honesty, or, (as the Word signifies) all that is *decent* and becoming towards Men; These are recommended, as our own Duty; and, in the next Verses, hinted at, as the most proper and efficacious Means to reconcile all around us, not only to us Ourselves, but to God himself, *who wills*, and desires most affectionately

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tionately, that *all Men should be saved*, as well as Ourselves, by *coming to the Knowledge of his Truth*,

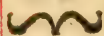
But tho' this was said, when the *Christians* were in the midst of Heathens, and Unbelievers; yet the Injunction, and the Reason of it, still subsists in great Force. For *Christian* Governors want and claim our Prayers as well as Heathen ones; and *Christians*, as well now as at first, may find the good Effect of such a Behaviour, towards their *Christian* Governors; that it may even now tend to their own Peace and Quiet, in all their Enjoyments, as it did under others: and always have the same indispensable Duty, of leading a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness, and all Decency, or in all and every Practice that is truly lovely, and truly becoming them in the relation they stand in, to all around them, in the Civil Society of which they are Members. This is so evident, in every Page of the Gospel, that it needs not one Word here to prove it; nor does the Time now allow me to go on upon this Head.

I will therefore, only add a word or two, upon a pleasing Subject, which offers itself unavoidably to our Thoughts, in applying what has been said, to the present Occasion of our meeting together. I believe you will be beforehand

hand with me in calling to mind, that the Prosperity, and outward Success, of the *Queen*, whom we obey, is our own Prosperity and Success; that when we pray for Her, we pray for Ourselves: That when we give Thanks for Her, we give Thanks for our own envied Happiness, in having One still at the Helm, who has, for many Years, so wisely steered between all the dangerous Rocks, that many Others have formerly split upon. And indeed, if we look around us, the State of all other Nations will engage us to acknowledge thankfully our own Happiness; whilst we enjoy by written *Laws*, what is truly valuable in this Life, as secure as Human Affairs can be, from the Inconveniences most to be feared in a Civil Society; and whilst the *Supreme Executive Power* is lodged in such Hands, as have made us, for a Succession of several Years, feel the kindly Influences of good Government.

I need say no more. Our own daily and hourly Experience say enough to move us to pray for the Increase of Prosperity to such a Government, and the long Continuance of such a State; and especially at a Time when the Blessings of Peace and Plenty at Home, seem to be vying with the Glory of our Arms Abroad: Moderation and Piety presiding here; Courage and Conduct exerting themselves Abroad;

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broad: and contending with each Other, in their Efforts to establish our Happiness at present, and to transmit it down secure to the latest Posterity. May we all, therefore, in Gratitude for such Mercies, join our Hearts and Voices to praise the Great Disposer of all Things for them; and to entreat the Preservation of them! and may we all resolve, in thankful Return to our Governors, and to God himself, to *lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty.*

*Which God grant, &c.*

S E R M O N

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# S E R M O N XX.

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Preached at the Church of St. Peter's Poor, on  
May 29, 1709.

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PSAL. cxvii. former Part of ver. 1.

*The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.*

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**T**HE Sentence I have now read to You, SERM.  
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carries along with it a most useful Lesson ; full of as much Satisfaction and   
Comfort, as reasonable Creatures could desire, in such Circumstances as Men are in, whilst they are upon this Earth. And what it sets forth to us is plainly this, that God, who first created all Things, doth also order the Course of this World, as we now see it ; and still continues to exercise a paternal Providence over it ; and to direct and govern the several Parts and Inhabitants of it : and that we have the greatest Reason to *rejoice* that it is so. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.*

In speaking farther to these Words I propose,  
*First,*

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*First*, To shew what is implied in the Affirmation, *The Lord reigneth*; and at the same Time, the Truth of it; and,

*Secondly*, to give some Reasons why the Inhabitants of the Earth should rejoice, *because the Lord reigneth*.

*First*, I propose to shew what is implied in this Affirmation, *The Lord reigneth*; and at the same Time, the Truth of it. And,

1. The general Meaning of it is certainly this; That a wise and powerful God presides over the whole World; that nothing comes to pass without his Will, his Decree, or his Permission; unless he sees fit to order it, or to suffer it to come to pass: That he holds the Sceptre of the Universe; and, comprehending all Things by an infinite Knowledge, and being able to order all Things by an omnipotent Will, he doth whatever pleases him both in Heaven and Earth: That, as nothing was made without Him, so nothing, from the first Moment of the Creation, hath happened in all the vast Extent of the World, amongst all the Multitude of Beings in it, which he did not think fit either to bring to pass himself, or to let other Beings bring to pass.

But, 2. In order to be more particular, Let us consider his Government, as it respects  
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the material and irrational Part of the Creation ; and his Government, as it respects the intelligent and rational Part of it. SERM.  
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As to his Government with respect to the material and irrational Part of his Creation ; let us observe, that it was He, who, after he had created every Thing, placed and fixed it in its proper Place ; and all in that peculiar and admirable Order, in which we now find the Universe with Wonder and Astonishment. And this was one Act of Government and Empire in him, to give Laws to all the Matter that he had put into several Forms, and allot to every Portion of it, and to every Machine, its proper Province and proper Office ; within what Bounds it shall abide ; how far its Influence should reach ; what sort of Motion it should have ; with what Quickness, and with what Determination, and to what End and Purpose it should move. Thus, having collected an unconceivable Number of Particles of Light and Heat, and fixed them in one vast Body, he may be said to have impressed on it a Law, tho' it was incapable of Knowledge and Perception ; and commanded it to bear such a Relation to a certain Part of the World about it, as that the Inhabitants of it might receive Light and Heat, and the Comforts of both, from it. And from this Time the Sun is said figuratively to have *known* its Rising, and its Going down ;



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down ; and has dispensed its Heat and Light in one regular and continued Course : illuminating and invigorating those Bodies that perform their several Motions round it, in a stupendous and never failing Order. Particularly, the Place and Station of this vast Body is so ordered by this wise God, with respect to this Earth we live on, that it is the immediate Cause of the greatest Benefits in Nature. If the Seasons succeed one another in a constant and never-interrupted Course ; Autumn and Winter, Spring and Summer ; if by this means the Earth is prepared to afford us its Riches, and doth accordingly bring forth its Increase, and all its Fruits, in due Season ; if the Vapours are carried up on High, and then let fall in kindly and benign Showers to refresh the Earth, and so circulate in a very beneficial and wonderful Manner ; if Corn, and all the Fruits of the Earth, have in them what is proper to nourish, strengthen, and refresh the Bodies of Animals, to gratify their Appetites, to continue and add an Agreeableness to their Lives : and if these Fruits, all in their proper Season, may be so cultivated, as to offer Themselves, in a regular yearly Course, to the Necessities and Conveniencies, of Man : If the Air be such as he can live and breath in, adapted to his Lungs, and the Frame of his Body,

Body; all this is owing to the Government of Almighty God; his original and first Decree by which He confined all Things to the Places they are now in, and fixed them in their present Relations and Proportions to one another; and particularly, to his planting the Sun, that immense Collection of Light and Heat, exactly where it might be most subservient to the Wants of that Part of his Creation to which He first ordained it to belong. All is owing to his Wisdom, who at first said, *Let there be Light, Let the Earth bring Forth her Increase*; and who by his first Commands constituted the Nature, the Properties, the Place, and the distinct Office, of every Work of his Hands. These, and the like numberless Appearances, regular and orderly, are great and manifest Instances of the Providence, or Government, of God; and therefore may be said to be implied in that expression, *The Lord reigneth*; and are not only so many wonderful and agreeable Appearances, but undeniable Demonstrations, that a most knowing, and powerful, and merciful Being presides, and has always presided and ruled, in the Universe.

But then, we must observe farther, that this God not only first constituted all Things, what they are in their Nature, and allotted them their several Places, and assigned them

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their

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their several Offices ; but that He has reserved in his own Hands, the Reins, to moderate and manage them as he sees fit : That He is not so tied up to the ordinary Methods and Causes which he has established, but that He sometimes interposes, and interrupts them, upon great and remarkable Occasions ; and shews that He can make the ordinary Course of Things yield to his great Designs. Particularly when He has a Religion to propagate in the World ; a chosen People to deliver ; a Nation to destroy ; a false Religion to shame and confound ; He reigns over nature : and, as He is the God of it, He seems to go out of the ordinary Course He himself once settled, to make the World of rational Creatures attend, and to raise their Thoughts towards *Him*, their Father and King. And this also may be supposed to be implied in the Government of God, as it respects the material and irrational Part of the World.

Let us now consider it, as it respects the rational and understanding Part of the Creation. And here it is plain, That, when he first endowed any Beings with Understanding, and a Faculty of Knowledge superior to other Animals ; and gave them, by this Means, a Power of answering the higher Ends of his creating such Beings ; of adorning the Station in which

He should place them ; and of imitating Him, whose Existence and Providence They could not but plainly discover : That, I say, this very adorning Them with these Powers, and noble Qualifications, was one Instance of his Government; and so was the placing them, Every one in his proper Sphere of Action. And because all his Creatures, of the most excellent Sort, are of finite Understandings, and of limited Powers; and particularly, because many of these intelligent Beings, not only Men, but, as it is represented to us in the Holy Scriptures, Angels, or Beings of an higher Rank, have left their proper Stations ; and, instead of carrying forward the Beauty of the whole, and making themselves subservient to the Designs of God, seem to have made it their Business to resist those Designs ; to interpose in the Midst of his Government ; to scatter Wickedness wherever they can ; and by that to bring Disorder, and Mischief, and Confusion, into the World, by all the Arts and Methods they are Masters of ; and even insolently to oppose his Purposes, as far as They can : Therefore, it is a most agreeable Observation, That Almighty God can never be supposed to leave the World to the Management of these Beings of an inferior Rank ; but to interpose himself, either immediately, or by the faithful Ministers of



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his Will and Pleasure, to shew that *Power* belongs unto him ; and that, though He has given some Measure of Understanding to inferiour Beings, yet he has not given them the Government of the World ; nor put into their Hands the Disposal of the Fortunes of any of their Fellow-creatures.

He may permit wicked Spirits, and wicked Men, to plot, and contrive, and lay down their Schemes to themselves, by which they hope to do Mischief in the World : He may permit them to go on in those wicked Thoughts, which their own evil and corrupted Natures suggest to them. But, whether they shall accomplish them, and bring them to Effect ; whether they shall succeed, or be disappointed ; is reserved to Him, and remains in his Breast only. He often laughs at their wretched Contrivances, and has them in Derision, and overthrows their whole Projects ; and with one Nod, controlls their Malice, and checks their Designs. He often infatuates their Counsels ; breaths Folly and inconsistency upon their Debates, and apparent Imprudence into all their Measures. And then, They work themselves into Ruine, and take the most effectual Course to bring on the Destruction of their own main Purposes. He often permits their abominable Designs to come to the End which They themselves wish  
and

and propose. But then, this is for some wise and good Purpose, He has in his own Eye; for the Punishment of other wicked Persons, or for the Reformation of a wicked People; or for the more conspicuous and terrible Downfal of these very wicked Beings.

He often, by secret and unknown Ways; by a false Friend or a cunning Enemy; by their own Jealousies, Quarrels, and mutual Animosities; or some more miraculous Method; discovers and prevents their Mischief. And then, they Themselves *fall into the Pit which themselves digged for others*: And the *Mischief they meant for others, falls upon their own Heads*. He often permits them to take every Step they please, and every Chain of their Design to be successful; that, when they come to the End of it, they may see that He governs and overrules even their Wickedness: and be surprised at last to find the Consequence of their Designs so different from what they intended it should be; and such Effects to proceed from their Contrivances, as these Contrivances themselves were thought the only Ways to prevent.

To prove what I have been saying, I will just mention some very remarkable Instances of the *Superintendency* of God, in the *Spiritual* and *Temporal* Concerns of his rational Creatures

S E R M. here below. As to the first sort ; Could any  
 XX. thing, for instance, be more maliciously contrived by the worst of Beings, than the ignominious Death and Crucifixion of *Christ*, which was his Plot, when he is said to have entered into the Heart of *Judas* ? And yet, could any thing be more agreeable to the End of *Christ's* coming into the World, or the Design of Almighty God, in sending Him ? and therefore more contrary to the Mind of that accursed Spirit in bringing it about ? Could any thing be thought of, more adapted to the Designs of the unbelieving *Jews*, than, after *Jesus* was dead, to set a Guard at his Sepulchre, lest his Disciples should steal him, and say he was risen, and his Religion should be propagated by this Means ? And yet, how were his Enemies over-reached by Providence in this ? This very Circumstance helps to prove that his Disciples did *not* steal him away ; and therefore, that he truly arose from the Dead ; and therefore, that his Religion is true : and so they assisted in the propagating his Religion, whilst they meant to extinguish his very Name and Memory.

And, in temporal Matters, Could any thing be more artfully contrived to serve the Jealousy and Hatred of *Joseph's* Brethren, than the selling him into *Egypt* : and yet, what admirable

mirable Purposes were served by it? *Joseph* SERM.  
raised to Honour; a Nation and Family saved XX.  
from Famine; the Foundation laid for the  
visible Displaying of God's Glory, in all his  
wonderful Dispensations towards the People of  
the *Jews*; in his bringing them out of Slavery,  
and separating them from all the World about  
them. ,

But I need not go far for more Examples of this Truth, in the Concerns of this World. This Day furnishes us with one as surprising and as remarkable as any to be met with in Civil History. Who that lived in the late unhappy Times of Confusion, that accompanied and followed the Civil War; Who that saw that State of Things, and how many Barriers there were set against the Restoration of the ancient Form; and how deeply Multitudes were engaged in private Interest, and in private Revenge, to resist every thing tending that way;— Who that knew these Things, I say, could have thought of that which afterwards happened? And yet, notwithstanding all the Contrivances of the most politick, and all the Care of the wisest Heads, by a wonderful Providence, the ancient Form of Government, and that very Form which we now so much glory in, was restored with the greatest Quiet imaginable, to the great Surprise both of



SERM. Those who wished it, and of Those who opposed it.

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I have now done with the *first* Head. And I hope, it has sufficiently appeared, from what I have said under it, what is implied in the Affirmation, *The Lord reigneth*; and, at the same Time, how strong the Argument is, that the settled Order, and regular Disposition, of all the Parts of the World about us; the Excellencies of his Rational Creatures, and the Great *Events*, with regard to *Them*; plainly declare the Care and Government of a most perfect Being over us; and that, *where* there are all the Marks and Characters of Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, *there* Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, ought to be acknowledged. And indeed, if we pursue the Subject a little farther, what can be more reasonable than to argue, That, as God first created us, and brought us into being, and placed us in this State; so, He did by that contract the Relation of a *Father* to us, and with it all the Obligation of Care, and Provision, and tender Regard, that result from thence—That He, who thus brought Creatures into Being, to make them happy, still wishes their Happiness; That He, who is perfect in Knowledge, cannot help knowing their Necessities; that He, who is perfect

perfect in Goodness, is most ready to supply them ; and that He, who is perfect in Power, is able to do whatever he pleases for them : and that therefore, He will not forsake or reject them, 'till they have rejected Him : ---- Especially, since there is a wicked Part of his Creatures designing Misery and Ruine to the other, who are not always able to provide against it ? For surely, we cannot be mistaken in this, which appears so evident, that a perfect Being cannot make Worlds of Creatures to sport with their Misfortunes ; or to leave them to the Mercy of any inferior wicked Beings : and that God, who makes no Creatures out of the Reach of his own Knowledge, or Power, must be supposed to govern what He creates. For, that He is concerned for them, is plain from his bringing them into Being : and, if He be concerned for their Happiness, it is absurd to say that He doth not exercise a paternal Providence over them.

II. But I must now proceed to the other main Point, which I proposed, plainly implied in the Text, *viz.* That we have all the reason in the World to rejoice, and to be perfectly satisfied under the Consideration of such a Providence ruling over this World, or under the  
Thought,

S E R M. Thought, that *the Lord reigneth. The Lord*  
 XX. *reigneth, Let the Earth rejoice.* And,

*First*, How happy is it for us, that this World, and every Thing in it, was constituted and ordered, and is still governed, by God, *i. e.* by perfect Wisdom, Goodness, and Power? How can we imagine the Nature of Things, the Stations in which they are settled, the Courses of the celestial Bodies, the Succession of the Seasons, the Fruits of the Earth, the Qualities of them, the Bodies of Animals, better contrived and ordered, with respect to Ourselves, and the Sphere we are to act in, and the Ends of our Life here? What Failures, and Errors, and Irregularities, might we justly imagine and expect; nay, What mischievous and pernicious Blunders, did any Being of less than perfect Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, preside over this World, and administer the Government of it? Here, indeed, appears the perfect Satisfaction we ought to have in the Thought of such a supreme Governour; when we know and consider, that, as Nothing is out of the Reach of infinite Knowledge, so Nothing can happen, in all the vast Universe of Beings, but what such a Being is aware of: That, as no Instance of Benignity, and the tenderest Love is too low for infinite Goodness; so such a Being must ever be disposed to all Acts of Beneficence

ficence and Kindness to his Creatures : and that, as nothing is too difficult for infinite Power, so such a Being must be able to do for his Offspring whatever his Goodness represents them to stand in Need of, and his Wisdom knows fitting to be done, and becoming his Perfections, and their Situation: That Nothing doth or can happen to them, amidst all the Changes and Chances they are subject to, but what a most wise Being judges proper, either to order, or permit, to come upon them; as Nothing can be designed against them, but what He has Power to prevent, if He pleases; and as this Power is accompanied with perfect Goodness, and the tenderest Regard to his Creatures. But, what I am now saying, will farther appear, by considering,

*Secondly*, What a great Unhappiness it would be to us, were we left to our own Management, and the Reins of Government put into our own Hands. Many are apt to think that, if they had the Disposal of Themselves, of their own Fortunes, and of all that belongs to them, they should entirely consult their Happiness, and secure their good Estate for ever: but very unjustly and unreasonably, as they would find to their cost, if God should be so unmerciful to them, as to take them at their Word, and put them from under his own Jurisdiction,  
and

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and make them to be the Framers of their own Fortunes. Such finite and imperfect Creatures as we are, see but a little Way. We can sometimes perhaps discern one Side of Things, and sometimes may guess right at the Consequences of them. But all our Knowledge that Way is but Guess at best; and is confined within a Compass that takes not in half the Circumstances of Things, that ought to be considered, before we should determine our Wishes and Prayers. And we are not only imperfect, and of a short and finite View; but we are passionate, educated with Prejudices, corrupted by evil Habits: often strongly inclined to Considerations on one Side, and averse to any (tho' never so plain, and never so material) on the other. And what excellent Governours we should be of our Selves, and of our own Fortunes, is plain. And again, what strange Confusion and Disorder must follow, were every other Man his own Master, as we desire to be in our own Case; and as He has the same Right to wish to be in *His*: whilst our several Designs, and Lusts, and Passions, must perpetually be clashing, and always annoying, disturbing, and confounding one another? Happy, therefore, is it for us, that we have it not in our Power, so often as we please, to Ruine Ourselves, and disorder the World about us! And very happy is it

it for us, that perfect Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, preside over us, to deny us what is not fit for us ; to afford us what is proper for us ; and to deliver us from the Effects of our own Follies and Passions !

And then, *Thirdly*, as it is an Happiness to be out of our own Jurisdiction, and exempt from our own Management ; so it ought likewise to be a great Satisfaction to us, that we are not left to the Will and Government of other Beings, of an inferiour Rank ; to the Mercy of that Part of the intelligent Creation, that have thrown off the Laws of God, and are always designing Mischief to their Fellow-creatures ; and, as far as they can, helping forward the Ruine of all the World about them : whilst the Innocent are at Rest, without Suspicion and without Fear. How much Misery, and Disorder, and Confusion would They bring about, were there only the good Part of the World to oppose their Designs, to detect their Contrivances, and resist their Power ? How much Ruine would they joyfully be the Authors of, did not *the Lord reign*, and protect his Servants from their Rage ? And how often would they procure, and bring about the Desolation of Nations, and Societies, and Families, did not an All-seeing Eye interpose to disclose their Arts ; and

an

S E R M.  
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SERM. an Almighty Arm, to resist and controll their  
XX. Power?

How great Reason therefore, has every Man, and every Nation, and Society, to rejoice that the Providence of God leaves them not to the Contrivances of ill-disposed and malevolent Beings; and on this Account to *rejoice that the Lord reigneth*, that He has reserved the Government of them, and the Disposal of their Fortune and Estate, in His own Hands so, as to controll the Malice, and deliver them from the Power, of their Enemies; and to hinder all wicked Beings from triumphing in the Ruine of the Souls and Bodies of their Fellow-creatures?

Thus have I finished what I designed at this Time. *First*, I have shewn, what we may suppose to be implied in these Words, *The Lord reigneth*: And observed what was sufficient to prove the Truth of this Proposition. And *Secondly*, I have shewn the great Reason we have to rejoice, and be entirely satisfied, that *the Lord reigneth*. And now, let us reap some Benefit from what has been said, and not let so noble and useful a Subject pass by us, without those Advantages it so plainly brings along with it.

If the Lord be truly the Disposer and Governour of this World of Creatures which he at first created;

created; if He presides over it with a watchful and careful Eye; let the Consideration of this fill us with Peace and Quiet within, and entire Resignation to his Will and Pleasure. To whom can we submit, and in whose Disposals can we acquiesce, if not in the Disposals of perfect Wisdom and Goodness? *If the Lord reigns*, and nothing can happen to us but by his Decree or Permission; let us rest satisfied, that all the united Force of evil Spirits and wicked Men shall not be able to hurt us, unless He thinks fit, it should be so. And be our Circumstances what they will, and our Case in appearance never so desperate, let the Thought of such a Governour, and such a King of Heaven, and Earth, comfort and compose our Hearts; the Thought that He that administers our Affairs is knowing, and wise, and good, to an infinite Degree; is most ready and willing to do us Good, and is powerful enough to free us from all Evil, if it be best for us. If God be for us; if his Eye be over us every where; it imports little, Who is against us. And as He will always be for them that truly fear him; then, *the Sun shall not smite them by Day, neither the Moon by Night*, for he is the God and Governour of Nature; *They shall not be afraid for the Arrow that flieth by Day, nor for the Pestilence*



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*Pestilence that walketh in Darkneſs, nor for the Deſtruction that waſteth at Noon-day : for all the Inſtruments of Death are in his Hand, and under his Direction. The Lord ſhall preſerve them from all Evil, he ſhall preſerve their Souls.*

Theſe are ſome of the Pſalmiſt's pious Thoughts upon this Subject ; and ſome of the general Affurances the Holy Scriptures give to good Men.

And now, to apply what has been ſaid more particularly ; Let public Societies rejoice, in a peculiar Manner, that *the Lord reigneth* ; that, amidſt all the Dangers that threaten them, they are the Care of an almighty and wiſe Providence ; that, whiſt contending Parties within them are purſuing their own particular Interests, and tearing in pieces the very Bands of all Happineſs : and whiſt powerful Enemies, without them, are threatning and contriving their Deſtruction ; that in ſuch Circumſtances, in which the Wiſdom and Power of Men often fail, an inſallible Pilot ſits at the Helm ; an all-ſeeing and gracious Eye watches and obſerves every thing that can happen ; and an almighty and tender Hand directs and determines every Event, as it is beſt and fitteſt it ſhould be, all things conſidered.

But

But I should be unjust to the joyful Occasion of this Day, and to the Reason of my appearing here at this Time, if I should not take more particular Notice of the great Reason we of this Nation have to rejoice, on every Return of this Day, that *the Lord reigneth*. For we are now met together to commemorate before God, one of the most surprizing Dispensations of his Providence towards us ; the Restoration of the Royal Family, and with it the Restoration of our ancient Form of Government that had long been banished from Us,—That Excellent Form of Government, so happily tempered between the Extremes of Lawless Power, and Lawless Confusion, as if it had been the Effect of a Consultation between the greatest Politicians, and the wisest Heads in the World ;---That envied Constitution, in which the Commands of the Prince, and the Obedience of the Subjects, are equally regulated by Laws. and Both secured from all those Unhappineſſes that attend some Sorts of Government, as long as the one is so wise as to enjoin nothing but what the Laws enjoin ; and the other so honest as to make a Conscience of obeying the Dictates of those Laws---And, what is more to Us, That Constitution which we yet, by the wonderful Goodness of God, enjoy, and upon which We are every Day con-

S E R M. gratulating our own Happiness. Such was the  
 XX. Blessing of this Day, in its Design, and natural  
 Consequence ; and such the Reason We have  
 to rejoice that *the Lord reigneth*.

What use was made of it, and what were the immediate Returns to Heaven for it, I do not willingly say, but would gladly draw a Veil over them, if they could be hid. But it is too plain that they were agreeable to our usual Gratitude to Heaven ; and too evident to be dissembled, that a mighty Torrent of Vice came with Violence into the Land, with these mighty Blessings ; that Men shewed their Thankfulness to God, not by the Integrity and Sobriety of their Lives, but by the highest Flights and Transports of Debauchery ; that they shewed their Zeal against that Hypocrisy which, they complained, had defiled the Land, by open Profaneness ; and their Loyalty to the King, by forgetting the God, by whom Kings reign ; and that many of them took occasion, from the Miseries that had followed the Overthrow of this Government, to use their best Endeavours to transform it into an absolute and arbitrary Tyranny. Indeed, these gross Abuses of so gracious a Providence reflect only a Dishonour upon those, who had so little Ingenuity as to be guilty of them. But they do not at all diminish the Blessing that Heaven designed



ed for this Nation. We Ourselves feel the benign Influence of it at this very Day, in the quiet Enjoyment of our Lives and Properties, under that Legal Government which it restored ; and which We still enjoy, in a manner never perhaps before experienced.

May We all, by Gratitude itself, be induced to live so, as to reflect Honour upon the God who has thus regarded us ; and may We, in a Sense of the Happiness we enjoy, all of us, in our several Stations, use our utmost Endeavours to transmit the same Happiness secure to our Posterity ; by guarding it against such as think Mankind fit for nothing but the Chains of Slavery ; and also by paying a cheerful and conscientious Obedience to the Legislative and Executive Power, now so happily settled, and in so excellent a Manner administered, amongst Us.

*Which God grant, &c.*



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# S E R M O N XXI.

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Preached at the Church of St. *Peter's Poor*, on  
the publick Fast-day, 1709.

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ACTS vii. latter Part of Ver. 26.

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*Sirs, ye are Brethren, why do ye Wrong One to  
Another?*

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**T**H E S E are the Words of *Moses*, by  
which he endeavoured to reconcile  
two of his Brethren, of the Children  
of *Israel*, who were quarrelling and striving  
with one another. This was not the first In-  
stance he had given them of his Regard to their  
true and real Interest; and of his Readiness to  
do his Nation the greatest Service he was ca-  
pable of doing: for it was but the Day before  
that he had defended one of his Brethren a-  
gainst the Insults and Violence of a barbarous  
*Egyptian*, and delivered him out of his Hands;  
by

by this means giving them a Presage of that great Deliverance which God would, ere long, bring about by Him. But *Moses*, whilst he hoped they would immediately close with this friendly Design, and unanimously accept of his Advice and Proposals, met with the common Fate of almost all who pretend either to be Deliverers of the Oppressed, or Reconcilers of the contending and quarrelling Parts of Mankind. For the *Israelites*, though they were of the same Nation and Family, linked together by the Ties of the same Religion and Profession, involved in the same common Slavery, Fellow-sufferers in the same Barbarities and Cruelties, and surrounded by the same common Enemies; yet, could not only find Time to abuse, and quarrel with, one another, but affronted and abused their best Friend and Adviser, only because he persuaded them to a mutual Love and Concord; and to avoid those intestine Dissensions and Quarrels which would inevitably weaken their common Interest, and obstruct all Hopes of their future Prosperity. Indeed, we do not read, that after he had completed their Deliverance, and was taken from them, there were any amongst them so insensible of the Benefits he had conferred upon them, as to pursue his Memory with Affronts and Indignities. Such Ingratitude was reserv-

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SERM. ed for latter Times. As to *Moses*; after *His*  
 XXI. Death we hear of Nothing but the Celebra-  
 ~~~~~ tion of his Praises, the most grateful Ac-  
 knowledgments imaginable offered at every Re-
 membrance of Him, and all but Divine Hon-
 ours paid to his Name. But, as I observed,
 whilst he lived amongst them, they treated him
 ungratefully upon every Occasion: And here,
 at the Beginning of his Regard to them, and
 whilst he was preparing them, by his good Ad-
 vice, for Freedom and Happiness, the Person
 whom he would have persuaded to Justice and
 Peace, instead of thanking him for his good
 Offices, endeavoured to touch even his
 Life.

There is something in this so applicable to
 Ourselves, that I could not but think it pro-
 per and seasonable for us to spend some of our
 serious Thoughts upon this Expostulation of
Moses in the Text. We are divided and tor'n
 to pieces by our mutual Hatreds, and intes-
 tine Heats, by our shameful Divisions and un-
 christian Tempers: Few amongst us care to
 hear of Love and Friendship; but will even
 revile the Man that but speaks to them of
 Peace: whilst in the mean while all acknow-
 ledge that it is the want of this mutual Love,
 and the Hatred which flourishes in the room
 of it, to which we shall owe our common Ru-
 ine,

ine, whenever it comes upon us. What can S E R M.
one think, but that there must be a secret In XXI.
fatuation from above, upon the Minds of
Men; a fatal Blindness, to which God has
given us over, when we see so much Danger
from our own Animosities and Heats, and
have not the Heart to consult our own Securi-
ty; when we read and hear of so many Na-
tions and Commonwealths, destroyed and laid
waste by mutual Hatreds and intestine Quar-
rels, and yet cherish the same Evils amongst
Ourselves, which we are sensible have hasten-
ed the Ruine of so many Nations before us?
In these deplorable Circumstances no good
Man, who has the least Concern for the com-
mon Welfare, can hinder his Thoughts from
running out upon all the possible Methods of
putting a stop to this growing Evil, and pre-
venting the fatal and natural Consequences of
it.

In speaking upon this Subject it is not my
Design, at present, to observe what Advances
might be made towards accommodating our
Differences, by Persons in the highest Stations:
for I am sensible to how little purpose that
might be, at this Time, and in this Place.
But I shall endeavour to offer such Observations
and Considerations as concern every private
Christian, and come within the reach of every

S E R M. Member of the Commonwealth, and that in
XXI. this following Method.

First, I shall shew what is the Duty of every *Christian* in those Differences, which thus distract Us.

Secondly, What are the great Hindrances to that Brotherly Love, and mutual Friendship and Agreement, which are so very necessary. And,

Thirdly, I shall urge the great and weighty Motives we have, at this Time, to pursue Peace, and Union, amongst Ourselves.

I. Let us examine what is the Duty of every *Christian* in those Differences which thus distract us. And this, I think, may be comprehended in two Particulars ;

First, It is the Part of every good Man to endeavour, by all the Methods of *Christianity*, to reconcile the contending Parties in the World; and, in the Spirit of Meekness, to convince the Judgments of those whom he imagines to be in any material Error. No Peace or Union can be so lasting, as that which is the Consequence of Men's being of one Mind, and of one Heart; of the same Opinions, and of the same Sentiments, in Matters of any Concern. There is something in Human Nature which

is delighted with the Agreement of others in our own Notions ; and there is something in the weak Part of it, that cannot always bear with a Difference and Diversity of Opinion. This Difference often brings on Disputes and Discourse ; and Argument often produces Heat and Violence ; and such Flames are seen to break forth, as would not have been, had there been an Agreement. So that it must be owned, it would be an incredible Happiness to Human Society, as it is seen to be in any Family, for Men to be of one Mind, and to have the same Notions and Opinions. Not that I think there is any ground to hope for such a Happiness. In the past Ages, it never has been experienced, or seen ; nor can it be much hoped for, or expected, by wise Men, in the *later* Ages of the World. I am sure, the Passions of Men are at too great an Height, to give us any Foundation for thinking of any such Happiness in our Days. But still, it may be right for us to labour, and do our Part towards it, tho' we reap not all the Success, and see not all the good Effects of it, we could wish. The little we can do, every one of us in our own Sphere, may serve to compose the troubled Waters about us ; and may prove, in time, a Foundation for a more general and universal Agreement. And therefore,

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fore, it is not the Improbability of effecting this that ought to affrighten us from attempting to bring all to the Acknowledgment of the same Truths which we acknowledge and embrace; provided always that in doing this, and in the Methods we pursue in order to do it, we break in upon no moral Duty, and no Command of our holy Religion. If we do, we shall be sure to cast more Scandal upon it, and do more Mischief by our Practice, than any such Agreement, even in true Opinions, can do good; nay, we shall rather be sure never to effect this Agreement, to any good Purpose. But,

Secondly, It is the Part of every good Man, amidst, and after, all his Endeavours to reconcile the Opinions of Men to one another, in what He thinks right; to love and bear with his Brethren, tho' they be not moved by his Arguments; tho' they cannot be persuaded, by what He perhaps may judge to be the plainest and most convincing Reasons, to alter their Minds; nay, tho' they return him Reproaches and Abuses for his good Design towards them. For, until that happy Day comes that Men be all of one Mind, (which whether it will ever come, or no, God alone knows,) this is the only way to procure or preserve Peace and Quietness in the World; and, indeed,

indeed, seems to be a more glorious Instance of Good-nature and Religion, than any that can be practised without such a Difference in Opinion. For to love Those who agree with us in every thing; to embrace Those whose Opinions fall in with ours in every thing, is no considerable Reach in Religion; nor any mighty Proof of a Person's Candour or Humility. But to love and bear with, and make Allowances for, Those who differ from us, and whose Notions are at a wide distance from ours; to be ready to condescend to These, and to do them all Good Offices, this is truly great and glorious. There is some Temptation to the contrary, something in the Pride and Passion of Human Nature contradictory to this, which makes it much more honourable, and a much higher Instance of Goodness.

And it is worthy of our most serious Notice, that it is a Temper of Mind that resembles Almighty God, and is an Imitation of that divine Copy; and therefore must be most acceptable to Him. How wide are most of our Notions from his, and at what a distance, too often, do our Opinions of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, stand from his; and how opposite are our Practices to his Will? And yet, He hath loved us, and borne with us, and made Allowances for our Weaknesses and Infirmities:
and

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and still invites us to all the Happiness we are capable of, notwithstanding this. And is it not fit that we should shew Ourselves as placable, as willing to make Allowances, as loving, as condescending and good to Those who differ from us, as the great God of Heaven and Earth has shewn himself to us? *If you love those who agree with you in all things, and whose Opinions are the same with your own; what praise have ye? Do not even the Publicans and Sinners do the same?* But if ye love, and bear with, Those who differ from you, and who contradict and oppose you in their Notions; then it is, that your Love and Good-nature exceeds the Good-nature and Love of Men of other Professions; then it is, that you come up to the Perfection of *Christian Love*; and then it is, that you may expect a great Reward; because then it is that you are the Children of your Father which is in Heaven, who hath dealt with you exactly as he would have you deal with one another.

Nay, and besides the Obligation to this mutual Love and Forbearance, amidst our Differences, arising from the Glory of the Practice, and the Example of God, one may say that nothing in the World could so effectually, by degrees, put an end to these Differences themselves, as the Practice of this Love. For it is
apparent

apparent that nothing puts so great a stop to SERM.
Agreement in Sentiments, as the Provocations XXI.
given and received; the Passions, and the Pride
of Men, with regard to their several Opinions.
And therefore, tho' we differ mightily at present, yet, could Men but be persuaded to the Exercise of this mutual Candour and Forbearance; were there Conscience made of doing all good Offices to all Sorts; this Good-nature would have, without Doubt, a very visible Effect; and the Tempers of Men would become disposed to think and wish for such an Agreement, as Passion, and a lofty Behaviour, make them now averse to; and mutual Forbearance would very much dispose things towards that universal Agreement in Matters of Concern, which is so agreeable to Human Nature, and so conducive to the Peace of Human Society: there being nothing that hinders such an Agreement, so much as Personal Prejudices; and nothing that removes Personal Prejudices so much as the constant Practice of this Love and Good-nature.

Thus much, about the Duty of every *Christian*, in the midst of those Differences that distract us. And the two Instances I have mentioned, are such as lye within the Reach of every private Person, and what All Men may practise.

II. I come

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II. I come now to consider, as I propos'd, in the *Second* place, what are the great Hindrances to that mutual Love and Good-nature, which cannot but be acknowledged to be so highly useful and necessary. And of these I shall speak but very briefly, because few can bear to hear of them : and I had rather suppose all Men heartily dispos'd to Union, than that any Persons concerned are guilty of what must hinder it. But I think it plain, that the greatest Hindrances to it, are, the Spirit of Pride, and Inflexibility in our own Thoughts, and our own Ways ; and of personal Hatred and Prejudice towards Others, in their Differences, from Us : and in some, the View to Ambition or private Interest. And these, indeed with the artful Management of our common Adversaries, and the Weakness of some honest Men, are the great Hindrances and Bars to that Happiness which only can be effected by mutual *Love*, and *Benevolence*.

The Spirit of Pride leads Men to think that they are always in the right ; and that it is more becoming, and reasonable that the whole World should conform to their Notions and Opinions, than that they should descend to the least Compliance with the World about them. And so long as this Temper flourishes, it is an
 Absurdity

Abfurdity to think of Peace or Union. The SERM.
Spirit of Perfonal Hatred, or Party Prejudice, XXI.
difpofes Men to think, that Nothing can be
right or well meant, that is propofed by fome
Perfons ; and that Nothing can be too hard a
Burthen to lay upon thofe of whom they have
conceived a hard Opinion ; and that Nothing
ought to foften them into the leaft Condefcen-
fion to them. The Spirit of Worldly-mind-
ednefs, and Self-intereft, makes Men averfe to
all Such Agreement and Union, unlefs it can
be fhewn, that it is for their own particular
immediate Advantage ; and, left it fhould prove,
at laft, a Bar in their Way, and an Obftacle to
their worldly Projects and Defigns ; by leffening,
or ruining, their Intereft, Power, and Influence,
in the World. And if you join to thefe the art-
ful Management of common Adverfaries, you
will, perhaps, have as good an account as can be
given, why any Nations or Societies have been
ruined by Difcord ; and why that Unity, which
is fo neceffary to the Prefervation of the Whole,
has been often prevented and hindered by any
particular Members of the Whole. As for Our-
felves ; you know that our Adverfaries, the
common Adverfaries of our Religion and Liber-
ties, want not for Cunning and Worldly Wif-
dom. They never drop, even for a Moment, the
View of their Caufe ; and are constantly apply-
ing

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ing themselves to the different Humours, and Passions, and Inclinations, of Men ; and spend the Force of their Minds, to improve the Pride of Some, the evil Temper of Others, the Worldly-mindedness of Others, to their own Purposes. They encrease the Evil, and add Fuel to the Fire, which they hope will at last consume us ; and, while good and sincere Men are not aware of it, the Enemy comes, and sows the Tares of Discord and Dissension, in such Ground as is supposed to be proper for them.

I come now, in the *Third* Place, to urge the great and weighty Motives we have to pursue this universal Love and Concord. And,

First, We are of the same Nation, and live under the same Government ; and, consequently, have the same Civil Rights and Privileges : a Consideration, which has always been accounted a very strict Bond of Union amongst Men. And these Civil Rights, and Privileges, are such as few Nations enjoy ; a Happiness, which proceeds from a Government so excellently tempered between Arbitrary Power, and Confusion, and Disorder. And then, We are of the same Religion, as to the main and fundamental Parts of it ; and the Profession of This, in Peace and Quietness, is deeply concerned in the Argument.

gument. And this *Religion*, such as few, even of the *Christian* Nations in the World, enjoy ; Reformed from the grossest Abuses and Misrepresentations of superstitious Men ; and rendered plain and useful, subservient to the Purposes of a good Life, and spiritual Worship ; for which it was at first designed by its great Founder. It is the Enjoyment of those Civil Rights, and the free Exercise of this holy and pure Religion, that so happily distinguish us from many other Parts of the *Christian* World. So that from hence it appears, that we have the same common Advantages and Interest to enjoy, if we be so happy as to preserve ourselves in our present State ; and, on the contrary, the same irreparable Loss to sustain in these two invaluable Goods, if we go on to carry forward the Work of our Enemies, by our Discord and Divisions at Home. And what can link us together in the Bands of Love, and in the amicable Prosecution of the same Designs, if a Sense of our Happiness, both as we are of this Nation, and of this Religion, will not ? If such Civil Rights and Privileges, such a free Enjoyment of what is our own, such a Liberty in the Worship of God, and the Exercise of our Religion, be not valuable and dear to us, what is it that we can value ? To be governed by Laws, and not by a single Will, and an arbitrary

SERM. Power; to be secure in the Possession of our
 xx. Properties; to be happy in the Freedom of our
 Bodies and Estates; and, above all, to be
 happy in the Freedom of our Services, and
 to be secure in the Performance of our
 Duties to God, and to one another: These
 are Advantages above any Price; such as we
 should envy in any other Nation; the greatest
 Blessings this World can know; and such as
 we should never enough admire, were it not
 that they are grown old, and that we have been
 too much used to them: So ungrateful are we
 that what should recommend them to us, real-
 ly helps to sink their Price in our Opinions,
 and to make us loath and undervalue them.
 But if the Enjoyment of these common Bless-
 ings cannot move us to that Love and Concord
 which are necessary to preserve them, let us,
 in the

Second Place, be alarmed a little, by confi-
 dering, that We have the same deplorable Ca-
 lamities to expect, unless we jointly endeavour
 to prevent them, by an universal and sincere
 Unity. For as, on the one hand, the common
 Happinesses we now enjoy are very great: so,
 on the other hand, the Loss, we shall in com-
 mon sustain, of our Civil Liberties, and the Ex-
 ercise of our Religion, must be very great, and
 irreparable; if our Animosities and Hatreds
 still

still go on to make a way for those Adversaries, who watch for nothing so much as the Opportunity of entering through our Breaches. And not only this have we to fear ; but, what is still worse, the positive Evils of That miserable State of things, directly opposite to the Present, which must succeed.

The Enemy that threatens us, cannot be supposed to prevail over us, but that his Maxims of Government must prevail also. And as this is a most deplorable, and almost insupportable, Civil Calamity ; so what we are to expect, as we are *Protestants*, is more so : for the other might be supportable, were it qualified and lessened by the free Liberty of our holy Religion. But what Miseries are we not to expect when this Liberty is denied us, and we are called upon to profess a Religion which we cannot in Conscience approve of ? And yet there is no Hope of its being otherwise, if the common Enemy prevails. For it has appeared, beyond all Contradiction, that no Oaths or Obligations have ever kept those of that Religion, whenever they have Power, from extirpating and putting an end to the *Protestant* Name. And indeed, I see not how any of Them could answer it to their Religion, and to their Church, if they did not. For, whatever some of that Religion would fain persuade the Poor and

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Ignorant amongst us to believe, in order to seduce them from it, or make them more favourable to it; it is notorious, from all their public Declarations, their greatest Writers, and their constant Practice, that they are obliged, (by their Principles,) to put an End to the *Protestant* Name, and destroy it from under Heaven, if they can. ~~How great then~~ are the common Calamities we are to expect, if we join our own Quarrels with our Adversaries Designs against us, when it is impossible to suppose that they are at all deviated from their former Practices or Principles; impossible to think that the Reformation is not still as much hated as ever amongst them; and that still they account it lawful and commendable to exercise the utmost Barbarities towards All, who will not publickly profess and exercise their superstitious and unchristian Religion. Certainly such Motives as these are of Weight enough to move even the hardest Heart, that has any Sense in it of our present Happiness; or any Belief of the Religion professed amongst us.

Last of all, as for our own Sakes, so for God's Sake, and for the Sake of that Name by which we are called, let us lay to Heart our Divisions and mutual Animosities; and let us all do our Endeavour to put some stop to them, and to
introduce

introduce Love and Concord in their Place : S E R M.
that our holy Religion be not blasphemed thro' XXI.
us; and that our Lord may be glorified in the
universal Practice of that Love, which He came
down from Heaven to plant in the World.

Which God grant, &c.

SERMON XXII.

Preached at *St. Peter's Poor*, on the publick
Fast-day, 1711-12.

DEUTERON. xxxii. 29.

*O that They were wise, that They understood this,
that They would consider their latter End !*

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THE Words, I have now read to you, are the pathetic and moving Wish of God himself, about the People of *Israel*. *O that They were wise, that They understood this, that They would consider their latter End !* Some Interpreters, indeed, understand them to refer to the Enemies of *Israel*, who were spoken of in the Verse before. But it seems to me much more probable, that these and the following Words also, belong to the Children of *Israel* ; and express, (agreeably to
the

the main Design of this whole Song, of which S E R M.
~~they are a Part,~~) the great Desire that XXII.
 mighty God had, to make them an happy and
 glorious Nation; and likewise, what it was that
 He expected from Them themselves, in order
 to this. That they refer to the Interest of a
 whole Nation, is certain: and therefore, tho'
 the Death of particular Persons may be called
 their *latter End*, and often expressed, in the
 common way of Speaking, by that Phrase; and,
 tho' this *Text* may be applied to That, confi-
 dered by itself, and separated from the rest of
 this Chapter: yet, it is plain that it has no Re-
 lation as it stands here, to the Death of par-
 ticular Persons, but refers wholly to the *latter*
End of Nations, or the final Ruine of whole
 Societies. Almighty God therefore doth, in
 this Verse (after the most pathetical Manner, a-
 mongst Men, of expressing the Desires of their
 Hearts) wish that the People of *Israel were*
wise, i. e. That they had such a Wisdom, as
 would direct and move them to Every thing
 proper and necessary, in order to their own
 Preservation and Happiness. He wishes that
 they *understood this*; which seems to mean the
 Method in which he deals with *Nations*;
 and in other Words, that they would *consider*
their latter End, or, how certain their *End*
 will be, if They will not behave themselves as

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the great Governour of the World expects ; and that they would *So* consider this, as to be moved, by this Consideration, to the Performance of all those Conditions which are necessary, on their own Part, to the preventing their Ruine, and establishing their Prosperity. And then it follows, (Verse 30.) *How should One chase a Thousand, and Two put Ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?---i. e.* What a glorious Current of Success should they have, in all their lawful Enterprizes against their Enemies, unless God should put a stop to it himself; and sell them into their Enemies Hands, and into a base Captivity, for the sake of their foolish and wicked Behaviour, and their ungrateful Returns for all those extraordinary Favours bestowed upon them by *Him*, and by his peculiar Providence ?

These Words, thus explained, you see, direct every Man, who is a Member of any Nation, or Society, to consider himself as such : not always to regard only his own private and personal Concerns ; but often to have in his Thoughts the Relation he bears to others around him, and what is required of him, as he is a Part of that *Whole*, in the Welfare of which, He himself, and all his own Posterity, and that of all around Him, are nearly concerned.

This,

This, I say, it becomes us all frequently to consider, and especially upon such Occasions, as That which has now called us together. And to this End, the Words before us are very proper, as they naturally lead us to the following Observations :

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I. That God doth truly desire the Prosperity and Happiness of Nations and Societies of Men.

II. That his Desire of their Prosperity doth not induce Him to make them happy, without their own joint Assistance ; but that He expects their own Wisdom, and their best Endeavours, to concur with Him. And,

III. That the Consideration of that *latter End*, and Dissolution, which *Nations* must expect, if they go on to displease God ; and of those Rules by which he acts, in his Dealings with Societies, ought to be of great Force to engage Us to consult our own Security and Prosperity, in those Methods which he has laid before Us ; particularly, by forsaking those *Vices*, which otherwise must be our Ruine.

I. Let us observe, for our own great Satisfaction, that Almighty *God* is truly concerned for the Welfare of all public Societies and Nations. Far be it from us to suppose, that He
ever

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ever wholly confined his Love and tender Regards, or pathetic Wishes of Happiness, to the *Jewish Nation*; tho' he selected them out of the whole Earth, as his own People, for the good Purposes of his Providence. His remarkable Punishment of the *Jewish Nation*, when their Behaviour called for it; and, at last, ruining their whole Polity, and the Fabric of their Commonwealth; and his waiting upon *other Nations*, to see whether they would repent or not; and his deferring their Destruction 'till they were past all Hopes: These *Particulars*, recorded of old, of His Methods of dealing with Nations, may assure us, that He has the same tender Desire of the Welfare of *All Nations*, which He had for that of the *Jews*; and that He is as truly concerned for the Happiness of *other Nations*, as ever he was for Those whom He called *His own People*. He is the Creator of *all Men*, and the great Governour of *all Nations*. *All* have a Title to his Providence, and fatherly Care; and *All* must be dear in his Eyes, 'till they have made themselves otherwise. It appears from the *Sacred History*, That, if *Abraham* and his Family had been as impious, and as corrupted, as the other Families and Nations of the Earth, God would not have chosen *Him*, and his *Posterity*, out of all the World,

as his peculiar *People*. And that, by this Choice, S E R M.
He did not mean to signify his exempting that XXII.
People from the *general* Rule of his Favour and Displeasure, towards *all* Nations, is most evident from his totally forsaking Them, and destroying even their Appearance, as a *Nation*, for the very same Reasons, for which He had heretofore cast out and destroyed *other Nations*, for *their Sake* : viz. *because their Iniquities were full*.

This, therefore, must be a mighty Satisfaction, that, whereas the Lords and Tyrants of this Earth often take a Delight in overturning, and confounding Families, and States, and Kingdoms, when their Projects require it, there sits a God on high, able and wise, to overrule their Power and Cunning ; who delights not in Destruction and Desolation ; whose Almighty Power is chiefly displayed in shewing Mercy ; and whose Delight it is to do Good to the Children of Men. And well might the *Psalmist*, upon Consideration of this, cry out, *Why boastest thou thyself thou Tyrant, that thou canst do Mischief ? whereas the Goodness of God endureth yet daily ? i. e.* How can you, the Tyrants of this World, pride yourselves in that *Misery* and *Ruine* which you can scatter around you ; when you have the Example of God before your Eyes, who is infinitely exalted above you,

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you, and cloathed with infinite Degrees of Power more than you are acquainted with : And yet, *his Goodness endureth daily* ; and yet *He* delights not in destroying, but in saving ; not in striking Terror upon the *Nations* of the *Earth*, but in showring down his Blessings upon them ? Did the proud, and ambitious, and insatiable Lords of this Earth but consider this ; what a stop must it put to all the Madnesses of their Power, here below ? How few Scenes of Blood and Desolation ? how few Countries depopulated and laid waste ? how few Barbarities exercised ? how few Families banished and extirpated ? how few Towns laid in Ashes ? and how few Instances of any thing like Violence or Brutality, should we see or hear of ? But, because this lovely Pattern of the most high *God*, and supreme Governour of the World is not regarded ; but Ambition, and an unbounded Love of all the Tokens of Power, reign in the Hearts of many of the Rulers here below ; therefore it is, that we have heard and seen so frequently the Characters of Inhumanity in the World, and Rivers of Blood shed, and Thousands of Lives sacrificed, to the Will and Humour of one Man ; therefore it is, that we see Engines of Destruction invented and improved ; all the Arts of Dissimulation to inveigle and cheat, and of Ruine and Violence

lence to destroy, more studied, and in more SER M.
Repute, than the Arts of Peace, and the whole XXII.
Band of Social Virtues. But these Methods are
not learnt from that great Governour of Heaven and Earth, who ought to be the great Pattern of the Mighty. For He is never represented to us to be more *delighted*, than when the Rules of his Government permit him to shower down his Blessings; and never more *grieved*, or acting with more Reluctance, than when He is constrained, as it were, by the same just Rules of Government, to pour his Wrath upon any People, or Nation. But,

II. We may and ought to observe, that Almighty *God* doth not so wish and desire the *Prosperity* of *Nations*, but that there are Conditions to be performed on *their* Part, without which he will not save them from Destruction. For Instance, it is absolutely necessary that they call up all their own Prudence, and enter into the best Counsels they can procure; that they take all Opportunites, and make use of all the most probable Methods, of preventing their own Destruction, by applying Wisdom against Wisdom, Force against Force, and using the honest Arts of this World, under the Conduct and Blessing of God. They must not forget to implore the favourable Eye and
knd

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kind Providence of that *God*, who sits over all; and can dispose the Fate of *Kingdoms* and *Nations*; and they must, at the same time, make use of the *Assistances*, He has put into their Hands, by his good Providence; remembering that He will not work Miracles for them, whilst They stand still and will do nothing for themselves. To this Purpose I cannot forbear to call to mind that, in that Storm, in which *St. Paul* was shipwrecked (*Acts xxvii.*) tho' an *Angel of God* had assured him that there should be no Loss of any Man's Life amongst them; yet, when *the Ship-men were going to flee out of the Ship*, *Paul* said to the Centurion, *except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved.* So sensible was He, that when God promises to save any Persons, either their Lives or Estates, He never means to exclude their own Endeavours; but always requires the same Efforts and Behaviour from Them, as if they were to be saved wholly by their own Power and Wisdom.

And as *one* Part of that Wisdom which *God* requires of a *Nation*, in order to their Happiness, is to use all their own Endeavours against the Designs of their *Common Enemy*; all that Strength of *Mind*, and Force of Arms, with which They are blessed; so, *another* Part of it is, to be *united* amongst themselves; to bury all intestine

testine Quarrels and Animosities in their one common Interest; and not to allow themselves in the least Thought of incensing, or vexing, or oppressing one another, whilst their *All* lies at stake, and they are engaged in the Defense of their one whole common Interest. For this mutual Ill-will doth naturally tend to their own Ruine and Destruction. Their Enemies so well know this, that they never fail to endeavour to bring it about, where it is not; and to make a sad use of it where it is, by improving it to their own Purposes. Nor will *God* resist, and hinder, the *natural* Tendency of what is founded upon the Folly and Imprudence of Those who might know better. When a *Nation* is collected within itself; and has a Centre, in which the Parts of it all meet; and one common Purpose in view, on which its Happiness entirely depends; and no little Interests and divided Plots moving in it; how formidable is that Nation, and how difficult to be overpowered and undone by any Enemies? They therefore, who first begin to scatter Jealousies and Uneasinesses in it; to disunite any Parts of it from the others, let it be under what Pretence it will, are the first who lessen, weaken, and dissolve its Strength; the first who give Life and Encouragement to its Enemies: little considering into what Mischiefs
such

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SER M. such Beginnings have been improved, thro' the
 XXII. Cunning of *Adversaries*, on one side, and the
 ~~~~~ Weaknesses and Passions of human Nature, on  
 the other.

There are some *Nations* so blessed by Providence, and enjoying such Advantages from *Nature*, always to be improved by *Art*, that a close Union amongst themselves would be the greatest and most probable of all earthly *Securities* to them; and such a Fence of Safety, as would be strong enough against the Force of All the Powers of this World united against them. And perhaps, this may be one Reason why we often see such a *Nation* the farthest of all others, from desiring or contriving, or effecting, that lasting and good Union within themselves, which would make their *Natural Defense* so secure and unmoveable. They are certain, indeed, of being taught, by frequent Experience, that *God* will not keep off the Danger and Fear of their Ruine, without it; but it is often seen, that they will not let that Experience itself have that Effect upon them which it ought to have.

I cannot here pass over in Silence the Sense of *Abraham* in this Matter; a Person, who had a greater Title to Prosperity and Happiness, *without* his own Wisdom, than any *Nation* upon Earth can pretend to. *God* had promised him,



him, to give him a most desirable Land; and to make of him a glorious People: yet, he knew perfectly well, that intestine Quarrels and Diffensions amongst Him, and his Relations and Friends, would be of fatal Consequence to him, and ruine all his future Hopes. The sacred *Historian* leaves it upon Record, as a Matter of some Moment, (Gen. xiii. 5. &c.) that *the Substance of Abraham and Lot was great, So that they could not dwell together*; and the Consequence of this was, that *there was a Strife between the Herdsmen of Abraham's Cattle, and the Herdsmen of Lot's Cattle*; and, the same *Historian* remarks, that the *Canaanite and Perizzite dwelt in the Land, i. e. Abraham and Lot dwelt amongst Nations, which were Enemies to them both*; and therefore, ready enough to make use of all Opportunities, and take all Advantages in order to ruine and extirpate them. And we find *Abraham*, so sensible of the ill Consequence of this Quarrel, if he should insist upon what he in Justice might have demanded; that he yields up all his own Concerns to the Concerns of Peace, and to the common Interest: *Let there be no Strife, says he, betwixt Me and Thee, and betwixt my Herdsmen and thy Herdsmen; for we be Brethren. Is not the whole Land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the Left Hand, I will go to the*

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Right;

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*Right ; or, if thou depart to the Right, I will go to the Left.* What greater Instance of Goodness and Condescension, and Regard to the common Concern of both, could we possibly imagine ?

But how different is this, from the Violence of Those, who give themselves up to the Study of a particular Interest ; and make the present exalting of *that*, the main Bent of their Thoughts and Labours, to such a Degree, that, even when the Whole is in Danger, they are seen rather to give the common Enemy an Advantage, than let go an Opportunity of revenging Themselves upon Others, or raising their own Power and Interest above theirs ? But in this Temper there can be little, or indeed nothing, of that Public-spiritedness, which is so necessary to the Happiness of a Nation ; and which must be guided by these Principles, That whatever is for the Interest and Security of the *Whole*, ought most readily to be followed and practised, by *all* the Members of the *Whole* ; and still more, that whatever is contrary to that, ought, for that very Reason, to be, upon the *first* Thought, rejected and condemned, tho' it tend to what we otherwise most earnestly wish, on some private and particular Account : And farther, that Nothing indeed can be for the Interest of a *Part*, in the *End*, which is not for the Interest of the *Whole*, in the Fate of which that *Part* must

be

be involved. This is what we may fairly gather S E R M.  
to have been the Wisdom of *Abraham* in such a XXII.  
Conjuncture; and this (we may fairly conclude,  
from the natural Tendency of mutual Jealousies and intestine Differences) is the most interesting Point which a *Nation* ought to regard, when its All is at Stake; and such an Instance of Wisdom as Almighty *God* expects, from all *Societies*, upon the same Occasions.

III. I come now to the *Third* Observation proposed from the Text, viz. that the *Consideration of their latter End*, ought to be of great Force to move all *Nations* to prevent their own Misery and *Dissolution*, by such Methods, as their great *Governour* has, either by Reason or Revelation, laid before Them: and particularly, by utterly forsaking those Vices, which otherwise must be their Ruine.

I shall not here repeat, what I have often, upon like Occasions, observed to you, concerning the *Dealings of God* with wicked, incorrigible Nations, recorded in the *Old Testament*. But I shall add that, even under the *Gospel*, we have had a fresh Declaration of this, in the Lecture our blessed Lord read to the *Jews*, (*Luke xiii.*) upon the Subject of certain severe and extraordinary *Providences* that had happened to *some* particular Persons of that Nation. Suppose ye, says he, (ver. 2.) that those *Galileans*,



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*whose Blood Pilate mingled with their Sacrifices, were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish: Or, those Eighteen upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, Think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

For these Words are a Declaration of the temporal Destruction of a *whole People*, and not an Account of *God's* Dealing with private Persons; and they were designed to signify, that, as these Persons mentioned were slain by a sad and uncommon Calamity, so, *that* the whole *Nation* of the *Jews* should be brought to Desolation, by a more terrible Calamity, unless they prevented it, by a timely and sincere Repentance, and Acceptance of his Offers: As if He had said to them — “ This is the *Lesson* I would have you  
“ learn from these Events, that You yourselves,  
“ as a *Nation*, shall so *perish*, in an uncommon  
“ Manner, by the just Judgment of *God*: and  
“ not, that such calamitous Events, which *God*,  
“ in the Course of his Providence, does not  
“ think fit to prevent, are designed, as Subjects  
“ for your censorious Tempers; or as *Argu-*  
“ *ments*, that Those particular Persons on whom  
“ He suffered them to fall, were *greater Sin-*  
“ *ners* than Those on whom they did *not* fall.”

And

And now, it cannot be at all improper to observe that, even without the extraordinary Declarations of God himself, against sinful Nations, in the Holy Scriptures ; *That*, I say, the Consideration of the *Natural Consequences* of Things, will itself convince us, that there is not a more certain Sign of any one thing in Nature, than the universal *Virtue*, or abandoned *Wickedness*, of a Nation is, of their flourishing Condition, or of their Tendency to Ruine. If Beneficence, and Charity, and all the Parts of true Religion, abound, and are universally practised and encouraged in a Land, *Happy will it be for the People that are in such a Case*, even in the ordinary Course of this World, constituted and appointed by God himself. But if Iniquity run down amongst them with a mighty Stream ; and all Degrees of Vice abound and flourish in a Nation, what will *their latter End* be ? It must fare with them, as it has fared, not only with the *Jews*, but with other Nations, whether *Greeks, Romans, or Barbarians* ; who have been seen to lose the Glory acquired by them in their former State of rigid *Virtue* ; and to waste away by Degrees ; in exact Proportion to their Improvements in *Vice* and *Luxury* : and, at last to be totally lost and ruined, by the genuine Operation of their own Corruptions. Thus must *They*, who imitate them in their *Degeneracy*,  
imitate

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imitate them in their inglorious and deplorable  
*End* also; and inherit the *Destruction* which is  
the natural Consequence of such universal Dis-  
soluteness of Manners.

I have thus gone over the *three Observations*,  
I proposed from the *Text*; and should now pro-  
ceed to apply what has been said to Ourselves  
and our own Circumstances. But I have left  
myself not much Time to do it; and, I hope,  
not much Occasion to spend many Words upon  
it. As Almighty God has a very great Concern  
for the Happiness and Welfare of Nations and  
Societies of Men: so, He has, in a particular  
Manner, shewn himself concerned for us, if we  
may judge by those frequent Instances of his  
Mercy which He has poured down upon us; and  
by the long Trial He has vouchsafed to give us;  
whether we will turn unto him or not; by those  
Evils He has from time to time sent amongst us;  
by those Fears and Dangers He has sometimes  
brought upon us, to awaken us; and those won-  
derful and surprizing *Deliverances* He has  
vouchsafed us, above all our Hopes and Expec-  
tations. He waits upon us, even yet; and still  
tries us with repeated Instances of his Love and  
Kindness. How long He will do so, He only  
knows. Would to *God*, I could say that we had  
made him any Returns agreeable to so much  
Love and Long-suffering; or that we seem yet  
to

to be disposed for Happiness. We are now in S E R M.  
some Danger again, as We are engaged in the XXII.  
Defense of Ourselves, as well as our Neighbours,  
against a very powerful and cunning Enemy.  
This is our common Cause, and the common  
Interest of every Member of this Nation.

Whether there be any amongst us who wish  
well to this formidable Enemy, is not our pre-  
sent Enquiry. But that which looks very ill,  
amongst all our Preparations against him, is  
this, That we do not hate this public *Enemy*  
more than we hate *one another*; that we are  
not more glad of an Opportunity of bringing  
him low, than we are of depressing one ano-  
ther; that we are not more filled with a just  
Resentment and Indignation against Him, than  
we are with mutual Resentment and Indigna-  
tion against one another at Home; that we can  
find time, when all our Thoughts ought to be  
wholly taken up against the common Adver-  
sary, to invent, and attempt, and prosecute,  
what may irritate one another; and disturb  
Our own Quiet at Home; and by this contribute  
our selves to the Strength and Advantage, of  
our Enemies *Abroad*.

If any please themselves with the Thought,  
that our *Enemies* are as wicked, and as bad as  
Ourselves, it must still be owned, that They  
are much more diligent in using all Means  
that



SERM.

XXII.



that have a natural Tendency to effect their Purposes; and have a closer and more constant Union within themselves, than we can pretend to: and that it is certain also, that God often makes use of one very *wicked* Nation, to ruine and destroy another: *Especially*, when this other has had more of his Favours; enjoyed more Light; and sinned against greater Conviction, and greater Mercies. I do not presage Evil to us. But we must not flatter ourselves, and be too secure. Thankfulness for former Mercies; Repentance for that Ingratitude, that has been shewn in Return for them; Reformation of our Lives; a public and uniform Encouragement and Regard to *Virtue*; and as public and constant a Discouragement of Vice and Immorality; Love to one another, and universal Charity; and a prudent Use of all the Means put into our hands by Providence: —These are the things which will not only prevent our *Ruine*, notwithstanding all the Efforts of our most powerful Enemies; but fix our Happiness secure, upon as a strong a Foundation, as the State of this World can admit of. *O that we were wise, that we understood this, that we would consider our latter End!*



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